



Students not impressed

In 2009, more than \$1.56 million in membership fees have been pumped into the Victoria University Students Association coffers, but students seem less than impressed with the service they are getting in return.

The feeling among many students *Hutt News*' sister paper *The Wellingtonian* spoke to, is that the association does nothing for them.

Many said student orientation weeks were "lame" and that they really didn't know what the association did.

A third-year commerce student claimed the association was a "joke".

"They take our money every year, offer services half the students don't even use and they speak out all the time on stupid issues that we students don't even care about or agree with," she said. One of the "stupid issues" was president Jasmine Freemantle's refusal to lay a wreath on Anzac Day.

None of the students *The Wellingtonian* spoke to supported Ms Freemantle's actions.

A second-year tourism



Warning: Jasmine Freemantle says voluntary student membership would make things "incredibly difficult".

management student said he had taken food packages from the association, but is shocked at the amount it spends each year.

ACT on campus vice-president Peter McCaffrey believed voluntary membership would eliminate misrepresentation.

"All students' voices deserve to be heard, and voluntary membership of student associations will prevent student associations from speaking on behalf of students who choose not to join," he said.

The students association consists of 13 elected

officials, including the president, vice-presidents and officers.

In 2009, the association will receive a total of \$1,670,127 from three income sources – student levies, Ngai Tauira, and car park and locker sales.

Association president Jasmine Freemantle said the association had up to 40 employees at any one time, fewer than 10 being fulltime.

In the 2009 budget, more than \$500,000 has been allocated to salaries. Ms Freemantle said her salary was \$30,000 a year.

According to the budget, \$140,906 is spent as "executive expenses" to officials and a treasurer. This is divided into salaries, honoraria, bonuses, elections and childcare.

Ms Freemantle said recently that if Sir Roger Douglas' voluntary student membership bill succeeded it would be "incredibly difficult" for the association to maintain a high level of student services. The Victoria University student association membership fee is increasing from \$131.60 to \$139.20 next year.