

Mandarin classes prepare West Coast for tourism growth

Learning the basics of the Mandarin language and Chinese culture is helping West Coasters connect with one of New Zealand's fastest-growing tourism markets.

Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) will launch another round of Mandarin night classes in Term Two, offering local businesses the opportunity to increase their understanding of Chinese tourists and create a better experience for visitors and locals alike.

TPP Council Chair Andrew Robb says the Mandarin classes are a great example of the future direction the institution is taking, with the provision of relevant, quality training that meets the economic development needs of the local region.

"New Zealand is gearing-up to welcome more Chinese tourists than ever before, so it makes sense for West Coast businesses to ensure they can make the most of the busy market. The West Coast is a unique and popular destination for tourists; by preparing for future growth and learning more about our visitors, we ensure we get the best results for everyone."

Mr Robb says TPP is looking to the future and has made a commitment to working with the community, local businesses and Government to ensure the ongoing provision of quality tertiary education on the West Coast that also contributes to the regional economy.

"Delivering education opportunities that meet the needs of the market is a key focus for us. The Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Study released late last year highlights tourism as one of the region's largest and fastest-growing sectors with opportunities for further development. By providing training that supports key industries, TPP is supporting the growth of the wider region," Mr Robb says.

TPP's partnership with the Canterbury University-based Confucius Institute sees a China-based language teacher travel to the West Coast for 10 months of the year. This allows for language and cultural teaching to be included in existing training programmes such as hospitality, trades and outdoor education, as well as offering evening classes to local businesses and individuals keen to learn more. Students will learn enough to carry out basic interactions with tourists and help them experience what the West Coast has to offer.

For more information about the mandarin classes available at TPP visit www.tpp.ac.nz/mandarin or phone 0800 TPP INFO

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