

## Outdoor students prepare for real-world jobs

Tai Poutini Polytechnic's Diploma in Outdoor Instruction and Guiding students have had the chance to dream big and lead a real-world expedition thanks to the support of a local sponsor.

Earlier this year, students wrote expedition proposals for a gruelling outdoor trip somewhere in New Zealand. They then pitched the ideas to their TPP tutors, fellow students and an external sponsor and the best idea was selected to become a reality.

Lead tutor Zak Shaw says well-known Kiwi solo sea kayaker Paul Caffyn, who lives on the West Coast, sponsored two expeditions in 2016 and had backed another one this year. The expedition proposals were presented in August, and the winning proposal was funded and took place earlier this month.

Winning student Kristy Williamson says she was "stoked" to have her proposal selected from amongst the entries. She, along with two fellow students and a support crew, completed a multi-pursuit challenge in early October taking them from the Nelson Lakes through to the Old Ghost Road.

"It was an amazing opportunity to complete a demanding expedition, leading the group added further challenge and responsibility that I hadn't experienced in trips we had previously taken part in. There is huge benefit to being able to carry out this sort of expedition as part of our training – it puts us in the position of having to manage all the elements, make decisions in the real-world and ensure a successful trip.

"It sets us up well for a career in a guiding or instructional role, as we get the experience of being in at times tough situations and having to make careful decisions. There's nothing like the reality of having been through an experience to help you gain knowledge and understanding."

Kristy's six-day expedition started with kayaking across Lake Rotoroa, leading into tramping through the Nelson Lakes, to Blue Lake, over the Mole Saddle, then kayaking on the Matakītaki and Buller rivers linking up to mountain bike the Old Ghost Road, covering a total of over 230km.

Mr Shaw says the Polytechnic is incredibly grateful to Mr Caffyn for funding the trip and giving students an amazing experience. "We know that the more experience students can get, the better guides they become. To go out and have an intense experience on their own, as part of an expedition party, builds resilience, endurance and good judgement – which is crucial when they will be looking after other people in the future. It also brings credibility," he says.

### Photo captions:

(Kayaking) Back to front: Expedition students Kristy Williamson, Kevin Burgess and Nathan Stead.

(Presentation) Left to right: Diploma in Outdoor Instruction and Guiding Programme Coordinator Zak Shaw, Student Nathan Stead, Expedition Leader Kristy Williamson, Student Kevin Burgess, Expedition Grant Sponsor Paul Caffyn.

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