

Tai Poutini Polytechnic and Open Polytechnic Joint Media Release

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West Coast to benefit from expanded tertiary education options

West Coast learners can now access a greater range of more flexible online training options, while still enjoying all the benefits of campus facilities and support services.

A new partnership between Tai Poutini Polytechnic and national online learning provider The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand is creating more tertiary training options and removing barriers to education on the West Coast.

Under the partnership, learners will be able to enrol in Open Polytechnic's online courses while also being able to access study support services at Tai Poutini Polytechnic's Greymouth and Westport campuses, including access to health and study support, library and computer facilities, plus all the benefits of campus life and activity.

Tai Poutini Polytechnic chief executive Alex Cabrera said the partnership is a great example of the new national vocational training model, being developed under Te Pūkenga, being used to benefit West Coast learners.

"We have more opportunities for collaborations and partnerships than ever; we are working to breathe life into the intent of the reforms and create benefits for our region. This partnership is one of a number of new initiatives we're working on this year that are designed to prototype what's possible under the new vocational education system, bringing innovation and great outcomes for learners."

Open Polytechnic chief executive Dr Caroline Seelig said her organisation was exploring new ways of working with regional polytechnic partners in support of the current reform of vocational education (RoVE).

"Combining distance learning with local campus services complements existing face-to-face and distance delivery and provides people on the Coast with another upskilling option."

Dr Seelig said Open Polytechnic enrolled 256 West Coast learners last year and many of them may also value having access to extra campus-based services.

Te Pūkenga chair of council Murray Strong said this sort of collaborative activity, along with many other examples across New Zealand, is the shape of the new network. Responding to the regional needs of the Coast through the use of experts, services from across the network is breathing life into the intent of the reforms.

Open Polytechnic enrolls 30,000 distance learners per year throughout New Zealand.

It offers 80 programmes ranging from certificates to diplomas and degrees, with subjects including accounting, marketing, early childhood education, social work, engineering technology, psychology, construction, horticulture, health & wellbeing and legal executives.

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About Tai Poutini Polytechnic

Based on the South Island's spectacular West Coast, Tai Poutini Polytechnic is the region's largest tertiary education provider, dedicated to meeting the needs of learners and employers. Study options span a wide variety of general and unique programmes including outdoor education, tourism, business, hospitality, trades, jade and stone carving and many more. Website: www.tpp.ac.nz

About Open Polytechnic

Open Polytechnic is New Zealand's specialist provider of open and distance learning, enrolling over 30,000 mainly part-time students per year. The majority of students are adult learners combining work and study. Website: www.openpolytechnic.ac.nz