

Tai Poutini Polytechnic Media Release

18 September 2020



TPP to meet demand for support learning on the West Coast

In response to significant demand across the West Coast, Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) is planning to launch a new programme in early 2021 that helps supported learning students transition into tertiary study.

Right now, there are no post-high school training programmes available for supported learning students on the West Coast. TPP has been speaking with educators, whanau and social services for several months about bridging the gap.

TPP Leader – Engagement Mequa Hourston says it’s clear from the feedback received from across the community that access to tertiary training is an issue for supported learning students.

“We intend to start with a pilot training programme that will offer foundation skills and basic training with a hospitality focus for supported learning students. We realise that the demand will be high for the programme and we’ll be taking a staged approach to rolling out more training options in the future.

“We held an information evening earlier this year with educators, families and support services to get an idea of the need. We’ll be inviting people back later this year to discuss what we’re offering in 2021 in more detail, as well as hearing from them what additional support services we might be able to provide while the pilot is underway.

“We want to make sure the training offered reflects the real need on the West Coast and the diversity of our people. That’s why we’ll be taking a staged approach to the roll-out of programmes and seeking feedback throughout the process.”

Parent Tracey Ilton says the idea of a tertiary training programme for supported learning students is exciting for both her and her daughter.

“My daughter left high school almost three years ago and there isn’t anything for her to go on to on the West Coast. Having something to look forward to and take part in is important – we both attended the first information session and we came away really excited.”

The idea for the training programme was first raised by West Coast District Health Board member Sarah Birchfield, who is also on the CDHB/WCDHB Disability Action Plan Committee, and a mother of a child who has a disability. Working with TPP, the concept was developed and, with feedback from the community, will be ready to deliver in early 2021.

Sarah Birchfield says there is an absolute need for this sort of training on the West Coast.

“The programme will be a great first step in helping meet needs and I hope there will be more delivery options in future. I’m very supportive of TPP’s initiative and keen to work with them to explore how we transition students into the workforce after completing programmes with TPP,” she says

For more information contact:

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