



Annual Report shows progress on financial targets

Tai Poutini Polytechnic has announced a lower-than-expected deficit for 2017, following efforts to reduce costs across the organisation and make positive changes for the future.

The Polytechnic's Annual Report 2017 shows a deficit of \$2.8 million. This is down on the previously forecast deficit of \$4.7m.

Chief Executive Alex Cabrera says the Polytechnic has been working hard over the past two years to address its financial and strategic challenges.

"We've had to make some significant changes to the way we work to ensure West Coasters continue to have access to quality, sustainable tertiary education.

"While there is clearly still room for improvement, the lower-than-forecast deficit shows we are making good progress toward that goal. The work done by Crown Manager Murray Strong, TPP Council, TPP staff, and ongoing financial support and confidence from Government, has ensured we can continue providing training that meets the needs of West Coast students and employers.

"During that time, we've made sweeping changes across the organisation to improve quality, tighten financial and administration processes, cut costs and make improvements to the way we operate. As part of this work, we're required to provide regular progress reports to Government which continue to show we are doing well against our targets, I thank all involved for all the hard work" Mr Cabrera says.

The Tai Poutini Polytechnic Annual Report 2017 shows it was a busy year for the institute. The focus remained on providing quality training that led students into jobs or further study, while work continued to address underlying financial issues and future planning processes.

Of particular note was the release of the NZQA External Evaluation Review (EER) in November 2017, which resulted in TPP receiving a Category 4 designation. Quality remains the number one priority at TPP and significant work is underway to address the issues raised in the EER and improve the designation ahead of the next review in December this year.

The Annual Report shows highlights for the year, including:

- **Satisfaction surveys** – in 2017 more than 85 per cent of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their training.
- **Destination surveys** – more than three-quarters of students went straight into jobs or further study after finishing their 2017 training. This rose to over 80 percent when considering West Coast students only – with around 40% getting jobs and a similar percentage going on to further study.
- **Financial milestones** – by the end of 2017, the Polytechnic's cost-cutting exercises resulted in a \$4 million saving on operational expenditure.
- **Campus changes** – the under-utilised Hokitika campus was closed, with a bus service provided for Westland students. Also, steps were put in place to see the Music and Audio Institute of New Zealand (MAINZ) transfer to the Southern Institute of Technology in 2018, freeing-up resources to focus on programmes of greater relevance to the West Coast.

- **Community connections** – significant time in 2017 was spent on strengthening relationships with the community and local employers to ensure we are delivering the graduates needed to fill gaps in the local employment market.
- **Structural changes** – changes were made to the Academic Board to strengthen quality procedures. A new Curriculum Advisory Group was set up to make sure programmes are fit-for-purpose, while an Ethical Framework was established to emphasise social responsibility.

Mr Cabrera says the organisation remains focused on making improvements to ensure the future of tertiary education on the West Coast.

“Clearly, polytechnics across the country are in a period of uncertainty as a result of the Minister of Education’s sector review. We have been heavily involved in this work and remain focused on our future on the West Coast as the review rolls-out.

“The Government’s ongoing funding support has signalled confidence in what we’re doing here at Tai Poutini Polytechnic. I’ve enjoyed working closely with community members and regional industry partners as we reshape training options to reflect the job needs of the West Coast.”

Independent auditor, Audit New Zealand, issued a qualified opinion for the Tai Poutini Polytechnic Annual Report 2017. It noted the identification of debt related to funding over-claimed between 2010 and 2015, along with under-delivery in 2016. It also noted uncertainty relating to going concern status, resulting from work undertaken by Tai Poutini Polytechnic to create a business case for the future of tertiary education on the West Coast being put on hold at the end of 2017 due to the Minister’s ITP sector review.

You can read the full Annual Report 2017 online at www.tpp.ac.nz/about-tpp/academic-publications

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