

31 August 2021

### West Coast Covid-19 recovery discussions underway

Tai Poutini Polytechnic today met with West Coast mayors and runanga chairs to plan for the region's Covid-19 recovery.

Leader – Engagement Mequa Hourston says learnings from the last major lockdown show that businesses and employers are expected to be significantly affected by the ongoing restrictions and uncertainty. Training or upskilling in new areas can be key to helping industry recover.

“We know that last time, many businesses needed support to deliver even during some of the lower alert levels, while some individuals had to start thinking about retraining or extending their skills in certain areas.

“There were also initiatives like the Government’s fees free training in trades and apprenticeships that need to be explained and leveraged for our community.

“As the region’s largest provider of vocational education, both to school leavers and for people already in work, Tai Poutini Polytechnic is being proactive about what the lockdown means for our region. Part of our role is to create community connections that support learning pathways, so we want to start by understanding how this lockdown has impacted our community. That’s why we started with our mayors and runanga chairs, then we’ll promote collaboration and community partnerships with other providers and agencies to help respond to any issues that are arising.

“As we are now part of Te Pūkenga, our national tertiary education provider, we have a mandate to support our community’s training and employment needs, and can access national resources and support to get behind regional initiatives such as this,” Mr Cabrera says.

Grey District Mayor Tania Gibson says the lockdown has, once again, been tough on the local community.

“We know some businesses and individuals will struggle to come out of the lockdown and they may need to look at other career paths or new training needs. It’s good to be talking about these things now so we can support our community in the coming months.”

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