

## Record Outdoor Education students move into jobs in changing industry

Tai Poutini Polytechnic celebrated its largest-ever class of Outdoor Education students at a special closing ceremony for the programme in November.

Tutor Zak Shaw says it was a unique event this year, with Covid-19 precautions affecting not just the ceremony but also changing the industry in which they are starting their careers.

“We’ve certainly had to make some changes in the last couple of years, but industry adjustments to changes in domestic tourism mean our graduates are still in demand for jobs around the country. Ninety-six percent of our diploma students from 2021 are moving into jobs, while most of our certificate students are returning next year.

“There are plenty of job opportunities out there – we actually don’t have enough graduates to fill all the jobs our industry partners are coming to us with. This is a good position to be in for our students and it reflects the work we’ve done to make the training relevant to the job market and prepare our graduates with the people skills and the practical skills they need to safely manage outdoor experiences for their customers,” he says.

The 2021 Tai Poutini Polytechnic Outdoor Education Closing Ceremony acknowledged the hard work of students and recognised some outstanding examples of success. As part of the ceremony annual student awards were announced, they included:

- Cave Creek Excellence Award – Alex Booker – awarded to a student who displays excellence in both the academic and practical aspects of the programme.
- Tim Jamieson Medal – Dayla Ward – celebrating an individual who brings Whanaungatanga and Manakitanga to the sport of kayaking.
- Sam Rainey Award – Jack Gibson – awarded to a student who is a natural leader who possesses a highly skilled and motivated character, is reliable and empathetic towards others.

Zak says it was a special event this year, with the key themes of resilience and the growing diversity of the industry coming through.

“We maintain very close relationships with industry and employers so we’re tapped-in to the needs of outdoor educators and tourism operators around the country. We are well aware of the affect of Covid-19 on the industry and the need to be resilient, adapt to changing circumstances and handle unpredictability is all part of the programme. Despite all that, the industry is strong with domestic tourism, so it’s fantastic to see our graduates launch into their careers.

“We also celebrated high numbers of female graduates, with more than half our students women who are now heading to work in what was traditionally a male-dominated industry.

“It was particularly pleasing to hear what our students had to say about their experience at Tai Poutini Polytechnic. Of course they all enjoyed the adventures and trips into the wild outdoors, but it’s actually the stories of personal growth, self-development, gaining confidence and leadership skills that they talked about being the real highlights of their learning journey.”

Find out more about Tai Poutini Polytechnic Outdoor Education [here](#).

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