

Tai Poutini Polytechnic Media Release

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West Coast students enter the dragon's den

It was a case of Dragon's Den-meets-West Coast-students, when budding entrepreneurs pitched business ideas at last week's West Coast BP Business Challenge.

Hosted by Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) and supported by Development West Coast, around 35 local students took part in the Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) event last week. The BP Business Challenge is a three-day programme for Years 10 and 11 where students can develop their skills, get in front of business people, and learn more about how a good business works.

Head of YES Liz Pittman says the West Coast event was a true testament to the power of community support.

"Thanks to TPP and Development West Coast, students from Buller High School, Greymouth High School, John Paul II High School, and South Westland Area School were able to attend the event. It was so fun to see the students' energy and creativity, not to mention their Coaster pride!"

Greymouth High School Head of Business and Enterprise Learning Ben Ching said the students involved found the process rewarding and were proud of their work.

"The YES facilitator had a fantastic delivery style that kept the kids captivated. Hopefully this will start to grow business studies as an option on the West Coast – there are so many opportunities for start-ups here," he says.

Students at the event had a great experience. Jessica Boyd said: "It was really fun and enjoyable. I got to learn lots of new skills that I will use in the future", while fellow student Ella Beirne said she'd never done anything like it before and it taught her things she would never have found elsewhere. Prakriti Dhakal said: "I liked how the facilitators were supportive. They found a good balance between letting us work and teaching us during the day."

TPP Leader – Engagement Mequa Hourston says it was fantastic to host the three-day event and see the students learn and grow.

"We see real value in the YES programme for West Coast students. TPP is here to support these activities and, as students gain knowledge and interest in business studies, help develop learning pathways here on the West Coast.

"We're always happy to throw open our doors and to what we can to support events that have real benefits for local people," she says.

The Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme is a year-long opportunity for senior secondary students to unleash their inner entrepreneur and experience the start-up world first-hand. During the school year, students set up and run a real business with real profit and loss. This year, we had over 4000 students from 200 schools participating in the YES programme.

Two schools (JPII and Greymouth High School) participated in the YES programme during the 2019 school year, and the YES team is looking forward to more students and schools from the West Coast unleashing their inner entrepreneur next year.

Ben Ching says the West Coast will become its own region for the YES programme in 2020, with plans for a judging panel to include local business owners. “A KickStarter event is planned to be hosted in Greymouth in February, eliminating the need for students to travel to Christchurch for the competition,” he says.

For more information contact:

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