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Collaborative venture a huge success

With huge growth in the coal and minerals industry on the West Coast, SGS New Zealand Limited, the world's largest inspection and verification company, saw a gap in the market for high level training for their employees. SGS approached Tai Poutini Polytechnic to offer specific training, with a chemistry focus, giving their employees the chance to up skill and gain a more in depth theoretical understanding of the industry.

In turn, Tai Poutini Polytechnic developed the National Certificate in Science (Level 4) programme to meet the growing needs of SGS. TPP also joined forces with Buller High School's science department to deliver the programme through block courses, evening classes and on-job tasks. Buller High School provided the teaching expertise and access to their lab and equipment for the collaborative venture.

'It's great to see this three-way collaboration between industry and education providers,' says Marja Kneepkens, the TPP West Coast Co-ordinator. 'The partnership has been a huge success'.

The National Certificate in Science (Level 4) programme, developed by TPP, included a good mix of theory and practical components focused around working in an industrial laboratory with equipment and tasks specific to the coal and mineral industry. Students gained a sound theoretical knowledge to underpin their day-to-day tasks at SGS.

Nine SGS employees successfully completed the programme in January 2014 and will be celebrating their achievements at an event in Westport on Tuesday 25 February. SGS's NZ Business Manager, Minerals Services, Hugh McMillan says 'overall the programme was very beneficial, it has allowed us to up skill existing staff, and broaden their scientific understanding which is necessary for working in a laboratory. It was also a great way to utilise local people.'

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