

TPP course sets up scholarship winner for success

This year's winner of the New Zealand Drillers Federation Scholarship credits Tai Poutini Polytechnic's (TPP) drilling programme with setting him up for success in the industry.

Dirk Hermsen, 45, of Te Awamutu, had been a dairy farmer most of his life before deciding to make a career change in 2013. He called a drilling company and was advised to complete the TPP drilling programme before seeking work.

"So I enrolled and I'm bloody pleased I did because I hit the ground running. There are a lot of things I would never have known without the course. It really set me up for the industry: as much as I had life skills and 20 years of common sense under my belt, the course gave me the specific skills I needed and set me up for work."

Dirk was awarded the New Zealand Drillers Federation Scholarship for the top student from the Greymouth-based TPP Certificate in Drilling - Non-Hydrocarbon (Driller's Assistant) July 2013 intake and is now working on an oil rig in Taranaki.

TPP Programme Leader Drilling Michele Cox says Dirk was outstanding among the 12 students enrolled in his cohort.

"He was practical, hardworking and capable and already had good machinery and plant knowledge before he started the programme. He led by example, was good with other students and helped those who needed it. He was looked to as something of a father figure and had the respect of students and tutors alike."

Michele says TPP's drilling programme is well-regarded in the industry, with companies always looking for graduates.

"The training sets our students up with the skills they need to step straight into the industry. It is a practical, hands-on programme and students need to come from a practical or mechanical background as it builds on this sort of knowledge and skill. Employers also tell us that our students come with the right attitude – we start at 7.30am and by the time they complete the programme they are used to the work environment."

The programme is a 14 week practical and classroom course, followed by 10 weeks work experience in the industry. The scholarship winner is chosen from the top performers across both aspects of the programme. Dirk intends to use the \$2000 scholarship award to further his studies in the industry.

www.tpp.ac.nz/study-options/civil-and-mining

www.nzdrillersfederation.co.nz

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