

Tai Poutini Polytechnic starts community discussions about the future

Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) met with West Coast community leaders yesterday to launch a series of discussions with the local community. The discussions provided an update on the future focused work that is being done at TPP.

Alex Cabrera, TPP's Chief Executive says, "Since Crown Manager Murray Strong was appointed at the end of 2016, we have been working to find ways to create a viable and sustainable business model that ensures access to tertiary education and vocational training on the West Coast. We want to make sure that the community knows what we're proposing, why we're proposing it and how our work will progress."

After this initial series of discussions, TPP plans to host further community discussions over the coming months to help keep everyone updated and to seek feedback on the path ahead.

Mr Cabrera says the first series of discussions is about touching-base with the community and talking about what's coming up. "These conversations will lay the foundations for a plan to address the challenges in front of us. We'll be coming back to the community again later this year to talk about more specific options for the future and seek feedback and ideas.

"We need to hear directly from the community to help us ensure West Coasters have access to quality tertiary education and vocational training that is relevant and leads to real jobs. We want to ensure we're listening to what local people consider is important for the region," Mr Cabrera says.

Mr Cabrera, along with Polytechnic Council Chair Andrew Robb and Crown Manager Murray Strong, met yesterday with a range of local community leaders including industry and schools.

"We have had strong support from both local and central Government as we look to address the challenges facing TPP right now," says Mr Robb. "These challenges, in particular our financial situation, are not going away. However, we've heard the Government's commitment to the continued provision of tertiary education on the West Coast. We want to develop a model that will be viable and sustainable and will ensure quality and relevant tertiary education and vocational training that meets both the needs of local students and businesses is available.

"Meeting with local community representatives to talk through the issues and hear their feedback is a vital step in the process. We are all looking forward to hearing ideas about what they think is needed to create a strong, sustainable model for providing West Coasters with relevant, effective tertiary education options right here at home," says Mr Robb.

Future community discussions will be advertised on TPP's website and in the local media. Some meetings will be by invitation only, however TPP is encouraging all local people with an interest in the future of tertiary education on the West Coast to have their say. Keep an eye on the TPP website for ways everyone can get involved www.tpp.ac.nz/future

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