

### **Delegation aims to boost China tourism market on Coast**

A Tai Poutini Polytechnic-led a tourism and education delegation travelling through China is helping the West Coast region make the most out of the growing tourism market.

The seven-strong West Coast delegation are in China right now, meeting with Chinese tourism operators, learning more about the culture and ultimately bringing home a better understanding of the booming Chinese tourism market.

TPP Director of Experiential Learning Dave Ritchie says the idea behind the delegation is to take New Zealand tourism operators to China in order to better understand the culture, creating empathy and ultimately a better tourism experience for visitors from this very important market.

The delegation is being run in partnership with Guilin Tourism University, with which TPP has developed a strong partnership through previous education and tourism ventures. It is part of a wider exchange programme, which will see Chinese students travel to Greymouth for a 10 week "NZ Style" ecotourism guiding programme later this year.

"The West Coast is a very popular Chinese visitor destination and the careful development of that market represents an opportunity to create a long term economic gain for the region," Dave says.

"The classes in Chinese language culture and consumer behaviour delivered to us by GTU have given us some great insights into what drives Chinese visitor behaviour that we previously did not understand. Field trips add experience to the mix and make the trip so much more valuable in terms of enhancing and cementing the learning."

TPP Tourism Innovation and Development Manager Ian Johnson says that Chinese tourists are attracted to the West Coast's wild and natural environment – they don't distinguish between the region's separate districts, so it was important to involve operators from across the Coast.

"By bringing a range of industry leaders on the delegation, the importance of collaboration between the districts is highlighted as well as the need for the region to understand the power of its attraction and brand."

The delegation includes representatives of TPP, Ngai Tahu Tourism, Gurden Consulting, Left Coast Events, and Top Ten Holiday Parks. They will meet with Odyssey Travel and Wowoyou (two of China's most successful online travel agencies), visit boutique accommodation suppliers in Yang Shuo, and meet with the Lijiang River Park management team to discuss their branding projects.

#### **For more information contact:**

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