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## **TAI POUTINI JUMPS IN WITH TRAINING FOR NEW AQUATIC CENTRE**

It's all go at Greymouth's new Aquatic Centre as staff get ready for its official opening and local training organisations such as Tai Poutini Polytechnic help get things up and running by training staff.

"It's going to be a fun day," says Grey District Mayor and Chair of the Aquatic Centre Committee Tony Kokshoorn. "It's an \$11 million project - the culmination of six years of fundraising so it's going to be a real asset for the community."

Tai Poutini Polytechnic is responsible for organising and running training for Aquatic Centre staff in the areas of Health & Safety, Professional Customer Service Skills, Water Testing and First Aid.

"All the training is taking place on-site at the Centre," says Ian Murphy, Business Development Officer for Tai Poutini Polytechnic. "Tai Poutini is a community-based organisation, so it's great that Council has involved us in the project and that we've been able to meet the Centre's training needs."

With the exception of Water Testing, Tai Poutini Polytechnic is supplying all the tutors. "Although we aren't using an in-house tutor for the Water Testing training, we've contracted a Christchurch-based consultant to come to the Centre so all the training can take place in Greymouth," says Murphy.

"If staff had to go to Wellington or Christchurch for this training, it would have cost an absolute fortune in travel, accommodation and food, so it's helped keep training costs down. We've worked hard to keep it local, which is what Tai Poutini's all about."

Mayor Kokshoorn says the Greymouth community has wholeheartedly supported the new Aquatic Centre, which includes a 25m eight-lane lap pool, a toddler pool, a learners' pool, a hydrotherapy pool, spa pools, two hydro slides, a courtyard and a playground area.

"With the warm environment and pool options from toddlers to spa pools at temperatures from 32 to 38 degrees, swimmers of all ages will be able to enjoy the water seven days a week all year round," says Mayor Kokshoorn.

"We've definitely raised the bar. In the past the West Coast has accepted below-average facilities but in the future, if we want to attract and retain skilled professionals, we need to punch above our weight; we need to be above average, and the Aquatic Centre is above-average. It will be brilliant."

Mayor Kokshoorn says the fundraising has been “a huge effort” for a town the size of Greymouth. “There has been a massive show of community support, with an army of volunteers pitching in to help.”

Volunteers excavated the rugby-pitch-sized site over the course of eight weekends, taking away 2,000 truckloads of gravel and soil. “They saved us hundreds of thousands of dollars and helped keep the cost down.”

Mayor Kokshoorn will open the new Aquatic Centre on 27th June, assisted by the youngest school starter on the West Coast, and the West Coast’s oldest resident. “There’s a 100 year age-gap between the two of them and they’ll cut the ribbon.” The two winners of a Council-run poetry competition will get a “Willie Wonka golden ticket” and be the first down the hydroslices.

Ends

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**About Tai Poutini Polytechnic:**

Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) offers a range of exciting programmes including outdoor education, ski patrol, ecotourism, jade and hard stone carving, professional chef and civil construction. Tai Poutini Polytechnic has campuses in Auckland, Matamata, Christchurch, Wanaka, Invercargill, Westport, Greymouth, Reefton and Hokitika. In 2009 TPP offers programmes at Greymouth, Reefton, Westport and Hokitika Campuses with no tuition fees (conditions apply).