

News Release 16 July 2009

## **SCHOOLING STUDENTS FOR THE SNOW**

If listening to the ski report each morning on the way to work is making you itch for the slopes, perhaps it's time to think about going back to school – snow school that is!

A division of Tai Poutini Polytechnic, the Mountain Education Centre of New Zealand (MECNZ) provides world-class training for students seeking to become expert in all things snow related. MECNZ is based at Wanaka and provides skills that can take qualified students to snow destinations all over the world, including a seven-month course in ski patrolling, and shorter courses in ski tuning and snow blasting.

Programme Co-ordinator Russell Braddock says MECNZ is dedicated to providing “specific vocational training” for those seeking Ski Patrolling careers in the mountains. “We provide a world class one stop learning hub for people wanting to work in the snow,” he says.

Being winter, the 2009 Ski Patrol programme is in full swing. It runs from March to September each year and includes a variety of short courses covering everything necessary to be an entry level ski patroller. This year's intake have got most of the theoretical work out of the way and after a week's break they'll be “out there doing it” at the school's on-snow classroom at Treble Cone, 40 minutes drive from Wanaka.

“They'll be bringing together all the things they've learnt so far, such as advanced first aid, meteorology, avalanche hazard management, rope rescue work, basic mountain craft and snow blasting,” says Braddock. “During their eight weeks on the mountain, they'll run through a variety of rescue exercises and will learn to identify and control various hazards.

“We love that the students get out and learn things first hand.”

This practical training “simulates a work environment”, and takes place in and near MECNZ's unique “snow” classroom which is accessed on skis or snowboard. The classroom is equipped with a weather station, rescue toboggans, first aid equipment, a radio repeater, lunch facilities and basic ski tuning gear, and provides a comfortable, heated, weatherproof shelter.

After their time at the on-snow classroom, the students will be ready for a month's work experience at one of New Zealand's busy ski fields and upon successful completion of all of the modules, they will receive an internationally-recognised MECNZ Certificate in Ski Patrol.

After that, the world is their oyster.

Ends

For more information please contact:

Russell Braddock                      Ph: (03) 443 4193  
Programme Coordinator              Mob: (insert number here)  
Email: [info@tpp.ac.nz](mailto:info@tpp.ac.nz)  
[www.mecnz.ac.nz](http://www.mecnz.ac.nz)

### **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).