

News release, 10 February 2010

CALLING ALL PREGNANT WOMEN – THE WEST COAST NEEDS YOU!

Calling all pregnant women on the West Coast! The Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology is for the first time offering students on the West Coast the opportunity to launch a valued career in midwifery.

But as a vital component of the course, pregnant women who are willing to have a student present for the duration of their maternity care are needed and are asked to come forward to support the programme.

This is the first year the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) is offering students on the West Coast a chance to complete a 3 year midwifery degree without having to move and study in Christchurch. Tai Poutini Polytechnic is doing its part to assist CPIT students by providing the students a base to learn from as well as access to video conferencing facilities to assist their weekly tutorials.

TTP head of department Roderick Turner says the catalyst for helping students study the course on the West Coast is the area's need for health professionals. "Working with the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology is one way of engaging with the programme and helping make the course available to students who may wish to stay and practice on the West Coast after graduation."

Pre-health tutor Sharon Ransom says in the past students have completed their midwifery training at CPIT in Christchurch and not returned. "But this initiative caters to West Coast people with a view to staying and working in the West Coast, which benefits everyone."

Midwives provide care for women and their babies from conception through to six weeks after the birth. Care is planned to meet the individual needs of each family..Nationally and internationally there is a shortage of midwives creating many work opportunities for both employment and self employment.

CPIT midwifery lecturer Julie Richards said last year was the first year students could study for the Bachelor qualification through a blended delivery programme. This is a combination of study weeks in Christchurch, on-line lectures and face to face tutorials. All students complete the same programme which is not affected by their location. The first off-site satellite of students was commenced in the

Nelson/Marlborough region and this success has led to CPIT offering the programme both on the West Coast and in South Canterbury.

Currently, four students are accepted into the West Coast satellite of the midwifery programme every two years. That number could change over time if the programme was sustainable and more midwives and women in each area were available to work with the students. "Students need to complete a significant practical component of the course, and for this midwives and pregnant women are required," she says. "In many cases the pregnant women assists in the teaching of the student through sharing her experience and it works well because it is up to the pregnant women how much the student becomes involved in the process."

CPIT often receives requests from pregnant women seeking a student to cover their pregnancy because of the detailed report undertaken by the student which is gifted to the woman.

Turner says Tai Poutini is to support learning for the midwifery students by hosting regular face to face tutorials and investing in video conferencing facilities as a backup plan if the midwifery lecturer is unable to travel to the West Coast. Students work closely with West Coast midwives to complete the practical component of the Bachelor qualification.

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About Tai Poutini Polytechnic:

Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) offers a range of exciting programmes, has had one of the highest course completion rates in New Zealand for the last 3 years, has low student to tutor ratios and great relationships with business and industry. TPP has campuses in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Christchurch, Wanaka, Invercargill, Westport, Greymouth, Reefton and Hokitika. In 2010 Scholarships are available for most programmes (* Conditions apply)*