

PRESS RELEASE

20 November, 2012



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MEDIA EVENT

Wednesday 21 November, 2012, 9.30am

“Life changing opportunity” for five young Maori graduates of WelTec’s Certificate in Carpentry programme.

This is the way David Lomax, Tamaiti Whangai mentor with the Wellington Institute of Technology (WelTec) and the Hutt Valley’s Te Runanganui o Taranaki Whanui describes the opportunity provided by a Wellington construction company.

The graduates have just been placed in jobs with building company David Hale Building Ltd in Wellington who is currently building 20 three-storey townhouses in Mt Cook with. The company plans to take on more WelTec graduates early in 2013.

“These are hardworking kids and they’ve been going great-guns with their studies this year,” says David Lomax. “Now they can use the skill set that they have learnt from building a house, which is part of their programme of study at WelTec, and apply it to a real job. It’s a tough job market out there and this training gives them a real advantage.”

“The building and construction industry has been very flat in Wellington for some time,” says Dave Hale, owner and manager of David Hale Building Ltd. “With the industry now starting to pick up in Wellington the future looks brighter for wanting to work in building and construction industry in Wellington,” says Mr Hale. “These young men are doing well in the job and don’t require as much supervision as someone coming in straight off the street. They are skilled with tools and have a good work ethic and disciplined approach. I’m very impressed with them and they have clearly had good tutorage from WelTec staff.”

“This is exciting news for Wellington and for our students,” says Linda Sissons, Chief Executive Wellington Institute of Technology. “WelTec and Whitireia have been training people as part of the government’s push on training New Zealanders for the Christchurch rebuild. We are extremely pleased that such a large cohort of students has been taken on by one employer who is committed to further training.”

WelTec’s School of Construction trains 860 students in all aspects of trades training. Around 550 graduate each year from entry level qualifications through to diploma programmes targeting supervisory roles.

The Tamaiti Whangai partnership in the Hutt Valley/Wellington area with Taranaki Whanui already provides an effective model, supporting all Maori youth from birth to 18 years old. WelTec experiences success with will continue to invest in the success of its unique Tamaiti Whangai programme with the local Maori community, which has already been instrumental in reducing the performance gap between involved Maori and all students to 5%.

The WelTec graduates are:

Shaun (Turirangi) Owen (aged 18) from Waiwhetu, Lower Hutt. Came through Tamaiti Whangai Academy and played in the New Zealand Under 15s Rugby League side as well as representing New Zealand in Touch Rugby. Shaun lives with his Aunty who is a policewoman in Lower Hutt. The WelTec

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programme along with the mentoring provided by David Lomax and the team has helped him get to this point and on his way to a great career in the building and construction industry.

Cormac Wyllie (aged 17) from Belmont, Lower Hutt. Attended St Bernards College. Father works as a foreman and Cormac wanted to follow in his footsteps and get into the building and construction industry. Enjoyed his studies with WelTec.

Vijay Prasad from Stokes Valley (aged 18). Came through Tamaiti Whangai Academy. Was from Feilding and attended Hato Paora College (Catholic Maori Boys College, Feilding). Referred to the WelTec programme by a former graduate.

Mike Corcoran from Wainuiomata (aged 22). Attended Wainuiomata High School. Was working in New World Wainuiomata before this opportunity.

Blaise Lomax from Petone (aged 22). Attended Wainuiomata High School. Has been a past Tamaiti Whangai student and spent time playing for Australian League clubs.

Photo and interview opportunity on Site: 26 Wright Street, Mt Cook, Wellington Time: 9.30am – 10.30am

Present: Dave Hale, Principal Company Owner, David Hale Building Ltd
Linda Sissons: Chief Executive WelTec
Roger Sowry: Council Chair
David Lomax: Student Mentor
Students will be available for interview

Further Background Information

Māori: Statistics NZ estimated that 9% of New Zealand's total Māori population lived in the Wellington Catchment in 2011. This equated to 59,800 individuals. Maori made up 11.6% of the Catchment's population aged between 15 and 65.

Unemployment among Maori and Pacific Island youth is high.

Professor Rāwiri Taonui was commissioned in mid-2012 to conduct an independent review of WelTec's Maori strategy. His report Current and Future Strategies for Māori Achievement, will guide WelTec's future focus in supporting Māori achievement. The document states that 'the combination of foresight and flexibility along with a willingness to embrace innovation reflects in the good relationship WelTec has nurtured with mana whenua in the Hutt Valley such as renewing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Te Rūnanganui o Taranaki Whānui first signed in 2008.'

The report confirmed the significance of Tamaiti Whāngai as what Professor Taonui describes as the country's best documented and arguably most successful support programme for assisting Māori tertiary students to succeed. He pointed out that very few Māori student support programmes in the country are able to produce equally hard data. Te Puni Kōkiri and Ako Aotearoa national review of more than 20 Māori tertiary student support programmes in 2010 found just one that was able to produce similar hard data for improved Māori outcomes.