

WelTec and Whitireia Media release

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WelTec and Whitireia announce organisational change programme

The Wellington Institute of Technology and Whitireia Community Polytechnic have today announced an organisational change programme *E Tū Ma Tātou – Our People. Our Challenges. Our Future.* – to restore their financial position and strengthen the provision of quality vocational education and training across the Wellington region.

“The educational performance of WelTec and Whitireia is strong however we face serious challenges including a weak financial situation and falling enrolments,” Chief Executive Chris Gosling says.

“Over the past 18 months WelTec and Whitireia have made significant changes to stabilise our financial situation and ensure we better match our programmes to meet student demand. However, our financial position is still fragile. We must restore our financial viability and lay the foundations for growth, so we can continue to provide quality vocational training and learning that meets the needs of industry, students, iwi and the community.”

The change programme includes a proposal to merge the two institutes by integrating Whitireia Community Polytechnic into the Wellington Institute of Technology. It also includes a proposal to close the Kāpiti campus, subject to consultation with staff, and work with the community to find a viable approach for delivering vocational education on the Kāpiti Coast.

“We have operated our two institutions side by side with a common council and executive for a significant period. It’s now time to further simplify how our two organisations work together by considering a merger to create a single, stronger vocational education and training provider for the Wellington region,” Mr Gosling says.

“Integrating our two institutes would simplify the experience for students, achieve financial savings, and remove duplication and complexity for staff thereby allowing them to fully focus on offering high-quality vocational learning and support for students.”

Views from staff, iwi and stakeholders on the proposal will inform a business case that WelTec and Whitireia will submit to the Tertiary Education Commission later this year for ministerial consideration. If the business case for integration is accepted, the Minister of Education would consult with staff, students, iwi and community on a proposal to integrate before making a final decision.

If approved, students of Whitireia Community Polytechnic would transition to become students of the Wellington Institute of Technology. Whitireia would support students with the transfer, including liaising with StudyLink and Immigration NZ.

E Tū Ma Tātou also includes a proposal to close the Kāpiti campus, subject to consultation with potentially affected staff.

“The current campus-based approach is not meeting the needs of local students and the community, which has been reflected in the declining student enrolments from 233 students in 2013 to 67 in 2018. The Kāpiti campus in its current form is not financially viable.

“We will engage with the Kāpiti community during 2019 to develop a viable model for delivering education that meets the needs of the Kāpiti community.”

A central element of E Tū Ma Tātou is engaging with staff, iwi, employers and local communities to develop a renewal programme to strengthen how the two institutes provide quality vocational learning and training to students across the Wellington region.

“This will include initiatives such as establishing long-term partnerships with major employers, government agencies and iwi, and delivering more flexible learning, micro credentials, and industry-based learning. We will be hosting a series of hui with staff, iwi and stakeholders to gather ideas to inform this programme,” said Mr Gosling.

Staff, iwi and those with an interest can provide feedback on the proposal to integrate over the next three weeks.

More information is available is at www.weltec.ac.nz/etumatatou and www.whitireia.ac.nz/etumatatou