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# Degree - a first for NZ

By Sue Wards

New Zealand's first specialist degree in sustainable practice will be based in Wanaka from next year.

Wanaka is fast becoming a national centre for expertise in this area and will be home to a new Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Practice, which is already being described as a "win-win" for the area. Steve Henry, Manager of Otago Polytechnic's Centre for Sustainable Practice, said Wanaka is a natural home for such a programme. "There is a high level of awareness here that lifestyle is about balance."

While it has taken only 18 months to get Tertiary Education Commission approval of the course, the new qualification represents years of work, Henry said. "We've been doing a lot of projects around sustainable businesses and community development and the time has come to put it into a qualification," he said. "There are some awesome people in this community who have driven this kind of thinking for a long time."

The degree course, which will operate from a new Otago Polytechnic campus on Reece Crescent, can accommodate a maximum of 24 students each year and is aimed at adults who are graduates or the equivalent, both locals and distance students.

"We're trying to open up as much as possible to the community," Henry said. There will be a fortnightly speaker series, open to the public, alongside class days,



What comes around goes around: Otago Polytechnic's Ella Lawton and Steve Henry with a Martin Hill sculpture representing interconnection. PHOTO: MARTIN HILL

field trips and on-line seminars.

Henry said students will spend about half their course time working on projects with host organisations such as businesses or community or government organisations across the district. The remaining time will be spent learning from successful case studies.

Project ideas are invited for consideration by the steering group which runs the Queenstown Lakes Sustainable Business programme.

Suggested projects to date include implementing biodiesel in Wanaka, creating a volunteering hub for tourists and providing solutions for behaviour change away from binge drinking.

Henry said the course has been designed so people in full employment can get credit for the work they do embedding sustainable practice anywhere in New Zealand. "This is a model of education with a difference," Henry said. "This course is for everyone but

particularly for those who want to focus on practical outcomes they can bring to their employment places and communities."

**"This is a model of education with a difference"**

Wanaka Wastebusters Manager Sue Coutts said the new course is an exciting development for Wanaka: "Theory and action need to go hand in hand. This new programme connects people thinking about sustainability with real world projects." Leigh Stock of Edgewater said the new degree course was a "win-win" for Wanaka. "As an employer we get to contribute to staff qualifications and give our people solid reasons to apply this way of thinking to their work setting."

The new qualification will be launched at 5pm tomorrow night (Friday September 24) upstairs at Kai Whaka Pai Café. Anyone with an interest is invited to attend.



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# Talented compassion performance

By Sue Wards

An amazing range of talent was on display in the Hawea Flat Hall on Friday night, to raise money for victims of the Christchurch earthquake.

The show, organised by local group Grassroots Gratitude, included confident performances by young poets and singers, an acoustic didgeridoo, a classical flautist, a jazz band and even an acrobatic pole dancer. Grassroots Gratitude co-organiser Tarn Felton thanked "all the people who came forward and donated their time and services." The show raised \$750, which will be donated directly to the Christchurch cause. See the group's website (www.grassrootsgratitude.yolasite.com) for details on how to donate money.



Ra Anderson, Kiri Rodgers and Haze Harrington performing on Friday night. PHOTO: ROBYN BARDAS



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