

## Minister's consultation on proposed merger of Aoraki Polytechnic and CPIT

Aoraki Polytechnic (Aoraki) and Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) are proposing to form a new tertiary institution to deliver sustainable high quality vocational education in the Canterbury region. The new organisation could be created based on the legal entity of CPIT, and by combining Aoraki with it. This means that Aoraki would be disestablished.

The Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment is consulting on this proposal which is set out in the Overview document. You can access the Overview document at [www.tec.govt.nz/aoraki-cpit-consultation](http://www.tec.govt.nz/aoraki-cpit-consultation), along with background information and useful links. This survey is a guide for your responses.

Your submission needs to be received by 14 September 2015.

Questions marked with an asterisk must be completed, while the others are optional.

### \* 1. Please tell us about yourself

<b>Name:</b>	<input type="text" value="Mayor Damon Odey"/>
<b>Company:</b>	<input type="text" value="Timaru District Council"/>
<b>Address 1:</b>	<input type="text" value="PO Box 522"/>
<b>Address 2:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>City/Town:</b>	<input type="text" value="Timaru"/>
<b>ZIP/Postal Code:</b>	<input type="text" value="7940"/>
<b>Email Address:</b>	<input type="text" value="mayorspa@timdc.govt.nz"/>

\* 2. Who or what are you representing in this submission?

- ☐ Polytechnic
- ☐ Private training establishment
- ☐ University
- ☐ Wānanga
- ☐ Industry training organisation
- ☐ School
- ☒ Local authority
- ☐ Union
- ☐ Iwi
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Staff member of Aoraki
- ☐ Staff member of CPIT
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Potential student
- ☐ Family of student or potential student
- ☐ Local business
- ☐ Business association or industry group
- ☐ Other community group
- ☐ Individual

Other (please specify)

\* 3. Do you agree with the proposal to establish a new organisation based on the legal entity of CPIT, and combining Aoraki with it?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral, neither agree nor disagree
- ☒ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Any further comment you would like to make?

The Timaru District Council is supportive of any direction moving forward that will maintain, enhance and grow the tertiary education opportunities available for South Canterbury residents. Any future entity should be aligned with the needs of a growing region and flexible enough to adapt as the region grows further.

It accepts that maintaining the current model of Aoraki Polytechnic as a standalone entity in South Canterbury is not a viable option going forward.

It also accepts that the establishment of a single entity with CPIT as partner is the best option for achieving future viability.

TDC supported in principle the initial proposal included in the paper "*Aoraki Polytechnic and CPIT: Exploration of Feasibility to form a New Combined Entity*". This was on the basis that the following fundamentals were addressed:

- A physical presence and facility must be retained in South Canterbury for local students
- The business model must recognise South Canterbury vocational educational needs and provide enhanced future opportunities
- Governance must include South Canterbury representation
- Any new entity must be regionally focused
- Aoraki Polytechnic financial reserves should be substantially protected for South Canterbury
- The impact of any merger is minimised on South Canterbury

However, TDC considers that the proposal as included in the paper "*Overview of a proposal for a new tertiary organisation in Canterbury*" and associated business case, as currently formulated, will not achieve the points listed above. It largely reads as a 'CPIT takeover', rather than a merger, and the benefits for Aoraki Polytechnic and the South Canterbury region are unclear and not guaranteed.

The proposal reads like a 'done deal', with potentially significant implications for existing Aoraki Polytechnic staff and tertiary educational provision in South Canterbury.

\* 4. Do you think the proposal to create a new organisation would deliver the following benefits? (See page 4 of the Overview document for more detail.)

	Yes	Possibly	No	Don't know
Better provision of tertiary education opportunities and outcomes for students in the Canterbury region	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support regional economic growth by better meeting industry and employer needs for a skilled and capable workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better engagement and partnerships with stakeholders for provision of vocational training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better academic quality through economies of scale and using the expertise of both institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stronger and financially stable organisation operating at lower cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhance national interest by meeting the six goals for vocational training set out in the Tertiary Education Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 5. Are there any risks or other benefits that you see in the proposal?

There are significant potential risks for the South Canterbury community in the proposal that concern the Council. These include:

**Loss of physical presence** - Timaru District Council believes that there needs to be an ongoing physical presence of a tertiary education facility in South Canterbury including retaining educational expertise locally

**Overlooking local vocational needs** - Whilst accepting the vision of the new entity is to deliver training to meet regional needs, it is important that any specific local needs are not overlooked. The new entity needs to ensure that enhanced educational opportunities are available to local residents, ideally provided locally. These include courses that might provide significant community wellbeing components.

**Protection of Aoraki Polytechnic financial reserves** - The financial reserves built up over many years should be substantially protected for South Canterbury educational investment, and not absorbed into a wider organisation. Local investment into facilities and support of students is advocated.

**Impact on wider South Canterbury economy** - Aoraki Polytechnic is a significant player in South Canterbury and its economy. It employs many skilled staff, supports and invests in the community and contributes to the wider economy. The proposal has potentially significant impacts on these aspects through loss of skilled personnel, community investment and economic contribution. These impacts must be minimised to ensure a viable, profitable and responsive educational entity remains locally accessible in South Canterbury. Current staff need to be fairly treated and retained as far as possible.

**Specialisation at the expense of other training opportunities** - Whilst endorsing the concept of "Centres of Excellence" this must not be at the expense of continuing a wide range of training opportunities available throughout the South Canterbury region. Specifically we would not want to see the Primary Supplies chain Centre of Excellence based in Timaru become the specialist offering of the polytechnic, with the subsequent loss of other training opportunities continuing to be offered in the Aoraki region or being relocated to Christchurch.

**South Canterbury the potential target for future cuts** - In the event that the proposal fails or to enable reduction in expenses, the Council consider that South Canterbury would potentially be an easy target for future cuts, putting at risk future educational opportunities in the area. Centralisation of courses to Christchurch could also be a result.

\* 6. Do you think the proposal will support the Tertiary Education Strategy's six priorities?

	Yes	Maybe	No	Don't know
Delivering skills for industry	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting at-risk young people into a career	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boosting achievement for Māori and Pasifika	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving adult literacy and numeracy	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strengthening research-based institutions	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Growing international linkages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain or comment

A larger region wide tertiary education provider is more likely to be able to sustain an effective research function, and grow international linkages.

The priorities around delivering skills for industry, successfully supporting at risk youth into a career, boosting achievement for Maori and Pasifika, and improving adult literacy can be achieved just as well within a smaller entity. It is important that in all these priorities the needs of the whole region are considered and where required localised delivery and solutions are found.

The risk of a larger institution is that international students would be directed/attracted towards Christchurch at the expense of other communities in Canterbury.

## 7. What do you see as the advantages/disadvantages of the proposal?

The Council have identified the following:

### **Advantages:**

- Potential medium and long term financial viability of a larger institution
- Greater opportunity for centres of excellence development and promotion
- Possibly greater career opportunities (but not in South Canterbury?)
- Enhanced research capabilities due to a larger organisation
- Possible wider range of training able to be offered through digital options for accessing learning. From an Aoraki region viewpoint we see that this could provide greater opportunities for degree level courses to be studied in South Canterbury and so providing more students with the option of remaining in the region.

### **Disadvantages:**

- Potential reduction of physical presence of tertiary training facility in South Canterbury
- Potential associated loss of skilled local staff and roles
- Potential loss of local community investment and economic contribution
- Potential loss of courses that enhance community wellbeing due to funding unavailability
- Potential loss of local access to other courses due to centralisation to Christchurch or funding constraints
- Inequitable impact on South Canterbury

\* 8. How beneficial do you think the proposal will be to each of these groups?

	Not at all beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Beneficial	Very beneficial	Extremely beneficial
Current students	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Future students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Priority learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
International students	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aoraki staff	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CPIT staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local community	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local employers/industry	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local iwi	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Canterbury region	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tertiary education in New Zealand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New Zealand as a whole	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide your reasons why.

Current students and staff run the risk of a disrupted period of study and employment. Potentially there is benefit to the Canterbury region as a whole to develop stronger links with industry to develop and deliver robust and targeted training that benefits employers and students alike.

In terms of students, we note the undertaking that all students will be supported to complete their current course of study and believe that it is important that those students who are undertaking study outside of Christchurch are able to continue doing this at their current location until study is complete.

From a staff perspective, there is strong inference in the proposal that redundancies are only likely for Aoraki rather than CPIT staff. We would expect that there are equal opportunities for Aoraki staff to apply for positions in the new entity and that where programmes of study are withdrawn or restructured in the Aoraki region with no corresponding changes at CPIT that Aoraki staff are not automatically made redundant.



9. If you don't support option 7, do you prefer one of the other options (as set out on Page 11 of the Overview)?

- ☐ Option 1: Ending collaboration
- ☐ Option 2: Continuing current collaboration
- ☐ Option 3: Continuing current collaboration indefinitely
- ☐ Option 4: A form of simple merger of the two
- ☐ Option 5: Maintaining separate institutions but establishing a combined council
- ☒ Option 6: Establishing an entirely new organisation and folding both Aoraki and CPIT into it.

Please state your reasons for preferring this option.

Based on the previous discussion in this submission and our concerns that the proposal will not benefit South Canterbury in the greatest way possible, we support Option 6 as the best way forward at this point. Any new organisation needs to meet the fundamentals we have outlined at the beginning of this submission, being:

- A physical presence and facility must be retained in South Canterbury for local students
- The business model must recognise South Canterbury vocational educational needs and provide enhanced future opportunities
- Governance must include South Canterbury representation
- Any new entity must be regionally focused
- Aoraki Polytechnic financial reserves should be substantially protected for South Canterbury
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A new organisation enables some of the earlier points raised in our July submission to be addressed in a more holistic manner that includes South Canterbury input:

- **Culture** - A new culture for the organisation can be created that takes the strengths of both organisations to help determine a successful outcome.
- **Success** - Measures of success can be determined that apply to both sub-areas of Canterbury and the wider region
- **Risk and Mitigation** - Risks can be considered at a broader and local level and mitigation strategies designed to ensure any losses at a South Canterbury level are minimised

A new organisation enables a fresh start for both organisations, and hopefully ensures that South Canterbury has a greater ability to manage its own destiny and have greater influence on the future of tertiary education in South Canterbury.

10. Is there any other option you prefer?

## 11. Do you have any other comments?

Aoraki Polytechnic and its predecessors have a long history of vocational and tertiary education provision in South Canterbury. They have contributed significantly to South Canterbury, its economy and communities. The loss of significant tertiary education provision would be a devastating blow to South Canterbury, and everything must be done to ensure this remains now and in the future.

The Timaru District Council is supportive of any direction moving forward that will maintain, enhance and grow the tertiary education opportunities available for South Canterbury residents. Any future entity should be aligned with the needs of a growing region and flexible enough to adapt as the region grows further.

It accepts that maintaining the current model of Aoraki Polytechnic as a standalone entity in South Canterbury is not a viable option going forward.

TDC supported in principle the initial proposal on the basis that the following fundamentals were addressed:

- A physical presence and facility must be retained in South Canterbury for local students
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In addition, Aoraki Polytechnic has built strong links with local secondary schools and it is vital that these links are maintained and enhanced. This needs to be via staff on the ground in Timaru, Oamaru and Ashburton. Physical delivery of programmes such as Vocational Pathways that provide joint secondary/tertiary programmes of study needs to continue at these regional centres.

We support the proposal for a Primary Supply Chains Centre of Excellence in South Canterbury. In addition we believe that Outdoor Education and Tourism should also be considered. The South Canterbury economy has a strong and growing tourism sector including adventure tourism and a centre of excellence would build on existing industry linkages and enhance the supply of vocationally trained graduates to service this growing sector.

TDC has serious concerns that the proposal will effectively amount to a 'CPIT takeover', rather than a proportionately equal partner merger. While many potential benefits are described in the report, there are no guarantees given, and the proposal reads like a 'done deal' with CPIT as the senior partner. The risks of loss of tertiary education provision in South Canterbury would have significant flow on effects to the wider South Canterbury economy and community. The Council questions whether the future growth of this area has been considered adequately in the business case put forward.

12. Apart from this survey, are you sending the Tertiary Education Commission any documents as part of your submission? If yes, please ensure these are clearly labelled with your name and organisation and either email them to [Aoraki-CPIT-Consultation@tec.govt.nz](mailto:Aoraki-CPIT-Consultation@tec.govt.nz) or mail them to Aoraki-CPIT Consultation, Tertiary Education Commission, PO Box 27 048, Wellington 6141.

☐ Yes

☒ No

Please give details eg number of documents:

13. Does any part of your submission (either in this survey or in separate documents) contain confidential information?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please provide details:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We appreciate your feedback.

We will analyse all the submissions and publish a summary of submissions at [www.tec.govt.nz/aoraki-cpit-consultation](http://www.tec.govt.nz/aoraki-cpit-consultation) once complete.