

MEDIA RELEASE

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Time to update the history of tertiary education in Nelson Marlborough

The transition from NMIT to Te Pūkenga this year marks another key moment in the evolving history of tertiary education in Te Taihū.

In 1904 the Nelson Technical Institute began teaching classes in cookery, woodwork, craft, engineering, plumbing and secretarial in a building on Hardy Street, known today as B Block on the Nelson Campus.

The institute merged with Nelson College in 1930, but by 1964 the college's council of governors operated it as a technical college with its head reporting to the Nelson College Headmaster.

After much lobbying, finally the Nelson Technical Institute ceased to be a branch of Nelson College, and in 1971 Nelson Polytechnic officially became a place of learning in its own right.

Our Polytech: a 25-year history of Nelson Polytechnic 1971-1996 written by Greg Hurrell was published in 1996 to 'capture the flavour of the 25 years that Nelson Polytechnic has been in existence'.

It documented the growth of the organisation through the 70s, 80s and early 90s as it expanded, developed new programmes, and negotiated the ever-changing education environment.

In 2000, the name changed from Nelson Polytechnic to Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology, to better reflect the organisation's status as the largest education and training provider in Te Taihū.

The Institute has continued to develop and offers over 100 qualifications from certificate through to master's level with specialisms developed in areas such as aquaculture, maritime, marine, viticulture and wine, and aviation engineering.

In October 2022 NMIT became part of Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology.

Now it is time to document the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology period in the history of tertiary education in Te Taihū.

About the writer

It is fitting that Alec Woods has been commissioned to write the history of Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology as he literally grew up on the Nelson Campus.

His father's GP practice and family home of 20 years was in a two-storied wooden house located at 326 Hardy Street. The house was acquired by Nelson Polytechnic in 1974 and over the ensuing years the 'Woods' House' was home to various departments including the Community Education Service, the Community Studies Department, and the School of Fisheries.

Alec is a history graduate from Auckland University and for many years taught history and English at Nelson College for Girls before he made a mid-life career change back to the seafood industry.

In 1995 he joined the New Zealand School Fisheries at Nelson Polytechnic. Alec has remained associated with the Institute since, despite a few excursions to positions with Sealord. He left NMIT in 2001 to form Pacific Networks Ltd and continued his association with NMIT, training fisheries observers for MPI and Fisheries Extension Officers from nations throughout the Pacific region.

Alec is looking forward to gathering the history of NMIT—the developments, the successes, the staff, the students, the stories and the highs and lows of Nelson Marlborough region's largest education and training provider.

He hopes to draw on the whakatauki, *Ka mua, ka muri* which means 'walking backwards into the future' or the idea that we should look to the past to inform the future.

"I hope the resulting book will give people a sense of pride in what the institute has achieved as we move forward into the next phase of tertiary education delivery in our region."

Alec says he is lucky that many of the sources of information are still accessible, such as the Chief Executives from 2000 to 2022 and the previous Board Chairs.

"I am not exactly sure what format it will take yet but I will look at the physical changes on our campuses, the education changes and the effect on NMIT, our business and iwi partnerships, as well as the history within each programme area and department."

Alec is hoping to identify someone from each area as a key contact person.

Anyone wishing to share stories, photos, information, or any material please contact:
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Ends

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