

**Did you know?**  
Did you know the Chamber takes part  
in 4 business link breakfasts with  
Massey and UCOL each year.

## Partnerships to help boost the local economy

At a Business Breakfast last month, I joined forces with Massey Vice-Chancellor Steve Maharey to urge local businesses to make more use of the region's two big educational resources - Massey University and UCOL.

A headline in the following day's business pages of the Manawatu Standard said: 'Merging Manawatu's business nous with the brains of tertiary providers could boost the region's economy.'

And of course it could. But from comments and questions after the breakfast function, it seems many businesses are not aware of what's involved in such partnerships.

The best way to explain is to tell you about our latest partnership, with the Palmerston North branch of manufacturers, Pridex Kitchens and Wardrobes.

Eight UCOL Joinery students now spend one day per week at Pridex, manufacturing and assembling kitchen, bathroom and wardrobe cabinetry, under the supervision of Pridex staff.

For UCOL, this gives our students the advantage of taking part in the manufacturing process, from start to finish, in a real life environment. They are still familiarising themselves with machinery and practical skills but they will soon pair off to manufacture kitchenettes.

For Pridex, Production Manager Warrick Jacoby says it's their way of investing in the future of the joinery industry by ensuring students are job ready when they enter the trade. He's aware that teaching resources are expensive, and it's vital that students use the latest technologies.

Warrick says the students are required to sign in, along with the rest of his staff, and the same rules of conduct apply. "They receive the full experience of being in the work force which means we expect them to act as one of our staff."

We have other partnerships to deliver academic programmes. Our Diploma in Interior Design has strong support from Resene Paints and King and Teppett Interior Design. Our Certificate in Contemporary Music is delivered in a partnership with Creative Sounds which runs The Stomach where our students rehearse and give public performances.

Perhaps our best known partnership is with Toyota and the Manfeild Park Trust: on our Motorsport programme, based at Feilding, students rebuild and convert Toyota cars into racing models then sell them on Trade Me.

There are also opportunities to exchange of knowledge - which can be very helpful for small businesses. As just one example, our Bachelor of Information Communication Technology students do a third year project aimed at achieving efficiencies for local businesses. Colville Mechanical, here in Palmerston North, now has a new web site, with help from one of our BICT students. Last year another BICT



Above: Paul McElroy

students created an online system for a large Chinese restaurant in Palmerston North - previously all of its orders were on paper.

But in the end, it's about raising the quality of the workforce in the Manawatu. And you can be assured that most of our graduates do stay in our region. A survey taken amongst graduates last year showed 84% were working (73%) or in further study. More than two thirds were in work related to their qualification and more than three quarters were living and working within the Manawatu.

If you are interested in partnering with us, please give me a call at UCOL.

Paul McElroy  
Chief Executive



Above: The Westpac Manawatu Business Awards were a very glam affair!

