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Pupils boost Kaipara business

by Joanne Speechly

Five Dargaville High School students with a brain for business are on the verge of establishing a unique brand of bottled water in the New Zealand market, after coming in the top six of 37 teams participating in the Lion Foundation's Young Enterprise Scheme

The experimental business programme involves secondary students setting up a company to create real products or services, and make an actual profit or loss.

In the case of Dargaville High, the students have liaised with a local marae, to bottle purified water in biodegradable containers, under the brand of Tahi Water, and negotiations are underway with the possibility of it being sold in BP service stations Northland-wide.

"It has been a real learning curve, following proper protocols, after we stumbled across the water source in a school conversation," said the group's mentoring teacher, Martin Middleton.

"The scheme is usually aimed at Year 12 and 13 students throughout the country, making our Year 11 group some of the youngest participants. They have done extremely well and are now in the marketing phase of the project."

Operations manager for the Year 11 entrepreneurs, Mia Adams, together with Freya-Rose, in charge of sales and marketing, as well as Andrew McLaren, Emma Carruthers and Libby Harding, all agree that the idea of making some money was a big motivation. Now, several months down the track, they are launching Tahi Water this month.

The team has 1,800 750ml bottles to sell, in the region of \$2 to \$3, depending on retail commissions.

The water is sourced from Oturei Marae and is currently being tested by the Northland District Health Board, while the biodegradable bottles come from a Tauranga manufacturer.

"The water comes out of a bore and goes through a neutralisation device, then through a massive filter and into the tanks. When the tap is turned on, it passes through two more filters and an ultra-violet device," said Andrew.

"Hopefully we make a profit and we can pay off our loans. If we are successful, we may continue the business or sell it to the marae and they have expressed a lot of interest.



From left: Libby Harding, Freya-Rose Newman, Emma Carruthers, Mia Adams and Andrew McLaren

"We're also looking for businesses to stock our product. BP is looking at carrying Tahi Water Northland-wide and Top Energy, who sponsor the scheme, are buying bottles also."

If other businesses want to help make Tahi Water a success, they can contact the team at mmiddleton@darghigh.schoolzone.net.nz.

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Fonterra tribute dinner



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Networking is good business



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Saving a book scheme



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