

INSIGHTS ON REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Health labour shortages in the region continue with nurses in significant demand.

Several health roles were advertised in September including doctors, technicians, support workers, dentists, pharmacist, anaesthetic roles, and counsellors. Te Whatu Ora West Coast General Manager Philip Wheble said since April 2023, 21 nurses had started in a variety of roles ranging from enrolled nurses through to clinical nurse managers and rural nurse specialists. Mr Wheble said they were working with people from overseas for various roles: "These folk are at varying stages of the immigration process."

Kaiāwhina, navigator, and other non-registered roles will continue to be an important part of the future health workforce. The locality prototype [Takiwā Poutini](#) is undertaking a kaiāwhina and navigator workforce scoping exercise to access local capacity and capability. The mental health system remains under pressure with managing community demand in a rural setting. Te Tai o Poutini needs a long-term strategy to build capacity and also to adjust model of cares to reflect whanau and community wishes. This could involve increased use of peer workers with lived experience of mental health and addiction, but these peer workers will need training, support, and supervision.

Te Kōunga o Te Hiringa Gary Coghlan Studentship Programme 2023/2024 gives students the opportunity to work in rural health.

Six studentships are on offer for students who are interested in working in rural health, who either reside on, have strong links to, or whakapapa to Te Tai o Poutini West Coast. The programme runs for a 4-week period over the summer holidays. This is a great opportunity to work in a health care setting and develop skills that will benefit their career. Closing date: Sunday, 29 October 2023 [Learn more](#)

Affordable housing is key for maintaining workforce in the region.

Businesses across the West Coast from a range of industries such as health, tourism, construction, manufacturing, and mining are reporting that the lack of available, affordable housing that fits a range of household types and lifestyles is essential to attracting, retaining, and developing a diverse, productive workforce.

The West Coast Housing Forum is working on an action plan, with a wānanga held in July, and moves to further engage across groups and sectors as to build a more thorough picture of the housing issues on the West Coast. The West Coast Housing Forum includes representatives from a wide range of stakeholders across the region.

West Coast schools continue to experience staff shortages.

The lack of teachers, relief teachers and teacher aids across primary and secondary schools on the West Coast continues with applications for advertised positions in the region mainly coming from overseas.

"The lack of registered teachers is concerning. It would be ideal for rural and isolated regions like ours if on the job training was available for Learning Assistants to be able to staircase into teaching roles without having to leave the region to study." Mandy O'Sullivan, Grey Main Principal

These challenges and opportunities were provided by Te Tai o Poutini RSLG members as important indicators of regional activity that impacts current and future workforce and skills needs/supply.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



We don't have enough young people living in the region coming through to replace those retiring workers in the labour market.

In 2022 there were 5,319 people aged 60-69 years and 3,591 people aged 10-19 years on the West Coast. (Infometrics)



Health industry significant employer

Approximately 1,800 people are employed across the region in the health care and social assistance industry including hospitals. Close to 300 of these positions are in the aged care residential services industry. (Kiwi Health Jobs Mahi Hauora)



House values holding up locally

West Coast house values are up 1.4%pa. The average West Coast house value for the June 2023 quarter is \$361,550, almost three times lower than the NZ house value at \$907,579. (Infometrics, June 2023 quarter)

RSLG ADVICE TO TEC

All 15 Regional Skills Leadership Groups will provide advice to TEC in early November to inform investment guidance to tertiary education organisations for 2025.

Te Tai o Poutini RSLG advice to TEC will focus on the following industries where we expect significant increase in demand for qualifications, occupations, or skills beyond 2025: Accommodation and Food Services; Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Construction; Health Care and Social Assistance; and Manufacturing.

Engagement with regional partners and stakeholders including iwi, businesses/industry, schools, tertiary education providers, and workforce development councils has helped to shape our advice.

Underlying themes for the advice include:

- Regional considerations such as an aging population, remote and dispersed population, lack of public transport, and the need for equitable access to education and training.
- The need for foundational skills including literacy and numeracy.
- Impacts of sustainability, technology, and emerging industries on provision.
- Mode of learning needs to be appropriate to the needs of learners. Requirement for increased flexibility of programmes, through hyflex delivery.
- Short, sharp, stackable blocks of learning are in demand, for example micro-credentials are in demand.
- Recognition of prior learning.

The advice also signals future training aligned with conservation (nature based) and renewable energy industry will be required.

We would like to thank all partners and stakeholders for their valuable contributions.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN (RWP) UPDATE

West Coast Business Survey

A recent pulse survey captured insights from 142 businesses on the current business climate, growth prospects, and challenges. The survey was a joint initiative by Te Tai o Poutini Regional Skills Leadership Group, Development West Coast, Upskill West Coast, Tai Poutini Polytechnic | Te Pūkenga, and Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (Buller, Grey, and Westland).

The survey revealed that in the upcoming year, 40 percent of businesses are hopeful of expanding their workforce, while half expect their employee levels to remain unchanged. Only 4 percent foresee a reduction in their workforce.

Of those that responded, 29 percent stated they are currently actively recruiting, while 38 percent finding it challenging to attract staff. If businesses cannot meet their workforce needs, 58 percent of owners would resort to working longer hours, while others might consider reducing services (26 percent) or cutting back on opening hours (17 percent).

The survey also provided valuable insights into the capability and training needs of local businesses and directly contribute to 4 of our 8 priorities in our 2023 (year two) RWP. Businesses that expressed interest in further engagement will be contacted, and the survey insights will assist in developing actions to support businesses, improve workforce development, and ultimately contribute to the overall success of the West Coast region. [Learn more](#)

Conservation programme to be offered in the region

The New Zealand Certificate in Conservation (Operations) level 4 delivery planning is underway for Te Tai o Poutini.

Conservation is highlighted as part of the focus of the [regional workforce plan](#) for Te Tai o Poutini.

Following demand from employers and significant support from community and industry Tai Poutini Polytechnic | Te Pūkenga is working towards gaining approval to deliver the Conservation Operations programme on the West Coast.

Often referred to as the "Park Ranger programme" this qualification provides ākonga/students with the skills and knowledge to safely work in conservation or recreation sectors, to care for the land and to work well with others. With guidance from conservation employers, Development West Coast, Toi Mai Workforce Development Council and Te Tai o Poutini West Coast RSLG, the programme is designed to align with the specific needs of Te Tai o Poutini. Work experience and the opportunity to work alongside industry experts will provide ākonga with hands on skills to be work ready to support environmental stewardship across the West Coast. [Learn more](#)

This is an example of a joined up and coordinated approach to identifying skill demands and implementing local responses.