

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS

The Nelson Tasman Regional Skills Leadership Group Regional Workforce Plan 2023 was released at a stakeholder event in Nelson on 12 July. More than 50 regional stakeholders attended, including iwi, industry, and local leaders. Representatives from five of the regions eight Te Taihū iwi were present, as were both RSLG Co-Chairs from Marlborough, highlighting the collaboration across Te Taihū. Reflecting the close partnership between local and central government and the work of the RSLG, two of the regions three members of parliament, Hon Damien O'Connor, MP for West Coast-Tasman; and Rachel Boyack, MP for Nelson attended, along with executive and elected members of Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council and leaders of key government agencies, including MSD and the Ministry of Education.



The 2023 regional workforce plan noted some positive labour market news regarding the region's workforce (March 2023 HLFS):

- the working age population (16-64 years of age) grew 7 percent, increasing to 92,900
- the number of people employed grew 6 percent, increasing to 62,9004
- the number of Māori in employment grew by 5.5 percent

However, the plan also highlights that we still have a lot to do to develop the future workforce needed by our major regional industries/sectors. In the [detailed advice to the Tertiary Education Commission provided](#) by the Nelson Tasman RSLG in April, regional skills shortages forecast for 2028 have been highlighted, with agriculture forestry and fishing; construction; manufacturing; health care and social assistance; and retail all showing critical skill shortages – and demand higher than the national average. The Visitor sector (cafes, restaurants, accommodation, pubs taverns and bars) are also forecast to have high regional demand.

"The RSLG goal is ensuring our regional economic development is supported by regional workforce development. That means understanding our current workforce; looking ahead to our forecast future workforce; and ensuring we have done all we can to have skills and training pathways that support our communities to take those opportunities."

Nelson Tasman RSLG Co-Chairs 12 July 2023


REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN

The 2023 Plan reports on progress and builds on the 2022 plan by including the regional workforce challenges and opportunities of two new sectors important to the growth of the Nelson/Tasman region – the visitor economy, and forestry and wood processing.

RSLG Co-Chair Ali Boswijk noted that "During the last year the Nelson Tasman RSLG has been on a continuous learning journey. We have sought out our regional stakeholders to converse and listen to gain a better understanding of our labour market challenges. The RSLG work reflects that collaboration, focusing our regional workforce planning, regional actions, and national advice to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), on sectors identified as having the most opportunity to address our regional economic challenges and enhance wellbeing for all our Nelson Tasman communities."


INDUSTRY FOCUS FOR RSLG 2023

Aquaculture




Continue working in partnership to advance priority actions in the National Aquaculture Workforce Plan including the forecasting of future workforce and the promotion of related careers and training.

Construction




Maximise the opportunity of regionally planned construction by establishing a regional construction coalition to establish construction skills pipelines and continue to strengthen access to allied trades training.

Forestry and Wood Processing



Establish a framework for collaboration across the region's forestry and wood processing sector, enabling a collective regional response to the economic development opportunities and workforce planning need.

Visitor Sector



Create a working group of regional stakeholders to support national leadership initiatives that focus on increasing the sustainability of the sector. This will include regional actions to increase perceptions of the skills the sector offers and their transferability; showcasing best practice actions in staff management; and fostering skills development and capacity in events management.

You can read or download the Te Mahere Ohumahi ā-Rohe o Te Taihū Te Waka-a-Māui | Nelson Tasman Regional Workforce Plan 2023 from the MBIE website [here](#).

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

At the launch of the 2023 RWP the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) announced its intention to establish and fund a role for a Regional Skills and Critical Industry Employment Coordinator.

The Coordinator will help identify and scale up training initiatives to meet the region's significant need for skilled workers. Working with priority industries, businesses, iwi, and training and education providers, the aim is to proactively help our region secure a local skilled construction and trades workforce, as well as develop higher-value, skilled career pathways for the region's job seekers.

Major projects such as the Nelson Hospital development and Kāinga Ora's new housing building programme will provide local workers opportunities to develop sustainable careers. Maximising this opportunity has been a focus of the RSLG and its partners in the region in the 2022 regional workforce plan (RWP). This is an ongoing goal in the 2023 RWP, particularly to develop a skills pipeline to meet the forecast demand, which the RSLG has been working to achieve for the last 12-months. The goal is to see locals employed beyond short-term roles, and instead to develop higher-value skilled jobs and sustainable careers, through the training available in our region.

A Pathway Leadership Breakfast is planned for 1 August to bring industry together with schools to support our rangatahi. The aim of this event is to increase awareness of the career paths available in the region and build stronger connections between school and industry to promote those opportunities. This includes creating partnerships that will enable regional industry practical examples to be used in the delivery of the curriculum, and to grow the understanding of schools and pupils of what areas of the curriculum are required/important for them to take up our regional opportunities.

The Nelson Tasman Older Workers Pilot project is progressing well. As part of the RSLG regional actions to support older workers 50+, Nelson Tasman region is host to one of five Senior Enterprise pilots funded by the Office for Seniors to foster interest in starting a business later in life. The Nelson Tasman project, called Primetime, is being delivered by the Chamber of Commerce supported by the Nelson City Council, and officially started on the 7th of June 2023. The 13 participants have a mentor, whom they will work with for the duration of the programme. Two workshops have been delivered to the group, with eight more scheduled, monthly, throughout the year. As the project progresses, skills and training needs are being identified, which will inform the work and advice of the RSLG in supporting other older workers.



The launch of the 2023 RWP received strong regional media coverage, including the front page of the Nelson Mail. One of the workforce issues and opportunities, highlighted in both 2022 and 2023 by the RSLG, is the expected shortfall of close to 2,000 skilled workers needed to meet known construction and infrastructure projects scheduled in Nelson Tasman over the next two to 10 years. The article also noted a productivity increase in the region of 3.2percent compared to a national increase of 2.3percent. However, our region's productivity remains the second lowest in New Zealand and our wages are the lowest in New Zealand. Justin Carter, iwi Co-Chair of the RSLG, said while improvements in productivity were a good step, there needs to be an ongoing focus on supporting industries to improve productivity and wages, commenting "Growing our skills to grow our regions productivity remains a key focus of the RSLG, to enable the creation of high value, high wage jobs."