

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



A new initiative in Kaikōura is looking to pair training for the building and carpentry sector with traditional secondary school education. Planned building activity in Kaikōura is on the increase and this initiative is intended to increase the number of local people entering the workforce with the skills that industry requires. Students would be taught relevant wide-ranging skills whilst continuing with their education, increasing their chance of employment in the sector. Whilst the initiative is only in the planning stages, there has already been some strong interest from potential participants, which is an indication of the value it will bring to both industry and the local workforce.

Ongoing labour shortages in the Mackenzie District are exacerbating operational challenges for businesses, particularly in the hospitality sector. As visitor numbers continue to rise, most tourism-based businesses are trying to operate with staff shortages, with many displaying a “hiring now” sign. Mackenzie District Council have partnered with other agencies like the South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, to support local businesses to develop solutions. Examples include focusing on productivity, and acting as a conduit to Immigration NZ to highlight issues and advocate on their behalf.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



Waimakariri’s economy grew by 7.3% in the year to June 2022, according to Infometrics provisional estimates. This places the district as the third fastest growing regional economy in New Zealand over that period.

Enterprise North Canterbury: Infometrics



A new record has been set by the Canterbury region for the number of new homes consented (per 1,000 residents) in the year ended August 2022. This is an increase of 23% (to a total of 8,691 homes), well above the peak of the Canterbury rebuild following the earthquakes.

Statistics NZ data released 30/9/2022



In February 2022, Canterbury had a 12% share of the total business locations in New Zealand and a 13% share of all employees. This is an increase of 4.8% more business locations and 3.4% more employees compared to a year ago.

Statistics NZ data released 27/10/2022

LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

A new initiative exploring how to best support people with dyslexia into tech careers is underway. Canterbury Tech is partnering with Dorenda Britten Ltd to design, test and implement the project. This includes a team of facilitators, researchers, innovators and dyslexia experts working with people with dyslexia that are currently working in the tech industry. The project team is co-designing a service blueprint that aims to improve the experience for people with dyslexia in finding and excelling at work. It is in part funded by the Digital Industry Transformation Plan team at MBIE, along with sponsorship from Vodafone and private donors. Inde, Trimble and Phocas Software are the current industry partners participating in the co-design of the service blueprint with their HR teams and neurodiverse staff members. The project is in part responding to industry’s need for more talent.

Talent International Institute (TII) partners with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to deliver “Skills for Industry”. The programme is delivered with a focus on meeting workforce needs for various sectors in Canterbury. TII placed 31 out of 34 trainees from their 2021-2022 financial year cohort across many sectors including Education, Banking, IT, Government & Corporate Admin, Retail, Hospitality, Healthcare, and Manufacturing. The programme has an emphasis on communication and ICT skills, and helps trainees to develop their confidence and adjust to a work environment.

LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

The number of Selwyn businesses experiencing a noticeable increase in operating costs has grown significantly. The data from an August 2022 business survey recorded that 84 percent of those surveyed had experienced a noticeable increase compared to 35 percent of businesses in August 2020. Feedback noted that “costs associated with doing business have spiralled” over the previous six months, with both domestic and global factors at play. The challenges of finding staff are contributing to the increase in expenditure as employers are required to advertise on more platforms, multiple times, to attract applicants. These factors are expected to constrain business’ ability to expand, and in some cases may force businesses to reduce their operations.

It is more difficult to find staff in North Canterbury than at any other time in the last nine years. In a recent business opinion survey, 64 percent of businesses reported that it is harder to find skilled staff than six months ago, and net 44 percent of businesses reported it is harder to find unskilled staff. These are the highest percentages since the survey first began in 2013. The main reason provided for the difficulty in finding suitable staff is that there are not enough people in the area to fill the jobs, resulting in a lack of applicants. This reason was then followed by: the current immigration policy settings, higher minimum wage levels, and wage rate expectations of new staff being unaffordable for some employers.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN (RWP) UPDATE

Implementation of Canterbury’s Regional Workforce Plan is underway, with many of the actions gaining momentum. For example:

NCEA achievement variance: Analysis of Canterbury’s NCEA data sets has commenced with various demographic and geographic metrics being considered including a particular focus on subject choice and its relationship with future career pathways. Once completed, this analysis will help inform the Canterbury RSLG on future direction and possible opportunities.

Manufacturing productivity and innovation: Work is underway to look at new learning and upskilling opportunities for the manufacturing sector. The Canterbury RSLG is working alongside the Workforce Development Council Hanga Aro Rau, and some local businesses, to explore possible models that may then be able to be piloted.

Health and Disability system review: Analysis of the key mental health insights and recommendations of the *Health and Disability System Review - Final Report* has been completed. The recommendations and findings from the paper relating to mental health have been compiled and will be reviewed to see how they can help support the Canterbury RSLG’s priorities in this space.

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS:

- Continue to progress the actions in the Canterbury Regional Workforce Plan
- Undertake further labour market analysis that will help inform the 2023 refresh of the Regional Workforce Plan
- Commence engagement and data gathering that will help inform an immigration statement for the Canterbury Regional Workforce Plan 2023 refresh