

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



Workbridge have found it more difficult placing their jobseekers into employment the past few months as economic uncertainty grows. Workbridge has successfully placed people with disabilities or health conditions into employment for the last 90 years, however they are having to work differently as the labour market shows signs of slowing and employers are increasingly hesitant to recruit. Despite the current challenging times, Workbridge in Canterbury has seen an increase in jobseekers being placed in employment in recent months as more employers are seeing the benefits of having a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Reliance on migrant workers presents both challenges and opportunities in the manufacturing sector. The manufacturing sector in Canterbury currently employs the largest number of migrants in the region of any sector, with 5,349 workers making up 14.2% of the total manufacturing workforce, as of May 2023*. The reliance of 14.2% is above the New Zealand average for the industry of 13.5%. This has presented challenges as immigration settings have tightened, however, also provides an opportunity for the region to explore workforce modelling for the region, which would then inform a future training investment approach.

**Source: MBIE, Evidence and Insights, Migrant Employment Data*

Household income growth in Canterbury is not keeping pace with the growing population and increased employment numbers. The average household income in Canterbury was \$107,786 in 2023, which was lower than the New Zealand average of \$125,177**. This would suggest that a higher proportion of those new incomes are below the national average. Despite recent wage growth in the region, Canterbury was 4.5% for the year to March 2023, compared to 5.6% for New Zealand.

***Source - Regional Economic Profile, Infometrics*

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



Strong annual employment growth of 5.0% and retail sales up by 4.8% for the same period has helped Canterbury with a healthy September 2023 quarter. This is likely supported by population growth and the robust jobs market. These figures are above national growth rates.
Source: ASB Regional Score Board September 2023 quarter



The total number of migrants in the Canterbury workforce has increased since pre covid levels. As at May 2019, there were 36,963 migrants employed in the region, compared to May 2023 when there were 37,284 employed. However, as a percent of the workforce, migrants were 12.7% in 2019 and as at May 2023 that sits at 11.7%.

Source: MBIE, Evidence and Insights, Migrant Employment Data



Employment of Waimakariri residents continued to grow, increasing by 3.1% over the year ended June 2023. This largely reflects continued growth of the district's population and in turn employment across a broad range of industries. This exceeds the annual growth across New Zealand which was only 2.6%.

Source: Enterprise North Canterbury, Quarterly Economic Monitor Report June 2023

LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Christchurch NZ (ChChNZ) and Ministry of Education (MoE) are co-delivering workshops with secondary school teachers to raise awareness of careers in regional growth industries. To date three workshops have been run to highlight the growth areas such as Aerospace, Health-tech, Food & Fibre/Agritech, and Technology; and to explore what teachers could be doing in their classrooms that aligns with these and raises awareness of learners to career opportunities in these sectors. As a next step, ChChNZ and MoE are looking at supporting a small group of 'influencer' teachers to develop a pack of resources for science teachers to bring Aerospace into their classrooms. This would be a pilot, with the goal being to further develop resources for other subject areas and industries.

The Chatham Islands Refreshed Investment Strategy 2023-27 has been developed by the four Island governance entities, the Chatham Islands Council, Hokotehi Moriori Trust, Chatham Islands Enterprise Trust and Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri Iwi Trust on behalf of the Chatham and Pitt Island communities. The revised Strategy includes five key areas, including an economic focus which includes developing a workforce strategy. Following the launch of the strategy early next year, the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) and the Regional Public Service Commissioner (RPSC) will continue to work closely with the four island governance entities to strengthen the all-of-government approach by establishing working groups to promote greater accountability and provide a mechanism for delivery of initiatives and core projects.

LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

Recruiting learners into nursing training remains a challenge, although the number of placements has been increased. The number of people registering their interest for the nursing qualification has in part been hindered by the uncertainty of the location of clinical placements that are on offer during the 3-year programme, as they could be anywhere around the country. Insights from the education provider show that learners who are older and have life commitments consider going out of town away from family as challenging if not impossible. And the younger learners often have part time jobs that enable them to study, so leaving town means either not earning or leaving their jobs for the period of the placement. A recently formed health workforce subgroup of the Regional Skills Leadership Group will start to explore the challenges and opportunities surrounding this issue.

The slowing labour market is impacting both employers and those looking for work, creating a mismatch in supply and demand. Local employers are not recruiting the same numbers as previously due to the uncertain economic period. Those looking for work are finding it's taking longer to secure employment, as there are less jobs advertised and more people applying for each. This is supported by the Jobs Online June 2023 quarter vacancy trends in Canterbury (along with Auckland, Manawatū – Whanganui, Taranaki) which are lower than expected at this time of year. There was a drop across all sectors, however manufacturing saw the largest quarterly drop of 12.1% and a 27.8% drop over the year to June 2023. Labouring positions had the largest occupational decrease of 32.5% over the same 12-month period.

Local Government are struggling to fill all their vacancies across the Canterbury region. Listed vacancies are dropping in the region, however, there still are high skill areas where occupation shortages are evident such as council roles like engineers, planners, ICT, admin, and finance. These recruitment challenges are resulting in operational limitations and local government is having to look at alternative ways to accommodate the staff shortages.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN (RWP) UPDATE

Canterbury RSLG's refreshed regional workforce plan was published in July 2023, and three examples from the nine actions are below. If you wish to get involved and support this mahi for these or any of the other actions please contact the secretariat by emailing CanterburyRSLG@mbie.govt.nz. The full plan can be viewed [here](#)

Future of the workforce:

- Contribute to regional and national policy settings and initiatives that attract and retain the right workforce for Canterbury, supporting the region to thrive and grow.

Training Pathways and Models are Relevant and Accessible and Support Learners and Employers Needs:

- Facilitate the development and uptake of alternative learning models for learners and industry.
- Facilitate enhanced connections between training providers and industry to ensure training courses are relevant and use applicable tools and methods that will build current worker capability and develop work ready graduates.
- Co-ordinate the collation of information and insights about the wider mental health workforce to understand barriers and enablers to entering and staying in the sector. Utilise this information to inform and support improvements to the training pipeline.

Support Rangatahi Māori:

- Support and explore ways to identify and engage with rangatahi Māori who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and explore ways to promote available services.
- Gain a better understanding of services that are successfully engaging rangatahi Māori on pathways that lead to sustainable high skilled employment.
- Support kaupapa that uses a holistic approach in mental health planning for rangatahi, encompassing principles like Te Whare Tapa Whā.

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS:

- Activities are underway to deliver on the eight actions in the 2023 updated Regional Workforce Plan.
- The RSLG health workforce subgroup will be exploring where opportunities may lie with the clinical placement model.
- Investment advice to TEC is being finalised, ready for the early November deadline.