

Hon Carmel Sepuloni

MP for Kelston

Minister for ACC

Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage

Minister for Social Development and Employment



Tēna kōrua

ANNUAL LETTER OF EXPECTATIONS FOR 2022/23

Tuia ki te rangi

Tuia ki te whenua

Tuia ki te moana

Ka rongō te pō

Ka rongō te ao

Tihewa mauri ora ki te whei ao ki te ao mārama

Ko te mihi tuatahi ki te wāhi ngaro, mō ngā manākitanga kua whiwhi nei tatou. E tangi atu ana ki te tini mei te mano kua ngaro atu ki pō, kia kotahi anō te kōrero ki a rātou, e moe, haere atu rā. Āpiti hono tātai hono te hunga mate ki te hunga mate, āpiti hono tātai hono, tātou te hunga ora ki a tātou.

Ki a koutou ngā kaiurungi, koutou i arataki mai ngā whakāro, ngā kōrero me ngā tūmanakotanga a te iwi, he tino whakamihi ki a koutou katoa!

My sincere congratulations on the delivery of your first Regional Workforce Plan (RWP). I want to acknowledge your leadership and perseverance as co-chairs, as well as your commitment to bringing together a range of partners and stakeholders to achieve this major milestone. Your passion and your standing in your regions are vital for the transformation of our regional labour markets.

As we move into the next phase of Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) evolution, it is useful to clarify my expectations of you, and your groups, over the coming year, while recognising this is a long-term endeavour.

Last year in my annual Letter of Expectations to you for 2021/22, I outlined the Government's priorities and my expectations for your role as co-chairs in developing your inaugural RWP. While these priorities and expectations still stand, your focus in 2022/23 will broaden beyond RWP development to include progressing the actions set out in your RWP. In this letter I outline the following three areas that I expect you to focus on, as well as how I intend to support you and your groups.

I expect you and your groups to continue to:

- **inform** local labour market actors by providing insight on current and future local labour market conditions and skills needs that you have gained from regional engagement and analysis
- guide, support and coordinate local actors to **shape** regional solutions to meet regional labour market needs

- **influence** government decision makers by identifying regional priorities, for example in vocational education and training provision, and by providing regional insight on labour market challenges and opportunities

Inform local labour market actors

Your inaugural RWP articulates regional aspirations, priorities, and actions for current and future workforce and skills development. Over the next year, I expect you to continue to engage with regional stakeholders and partners, including iwi/hapū/Māori, local employers, communities, and workers, about your plans. The insight provided from this engagement should inform your mid-2023 RWP refresh, particularly your regional priorities.

I expect to see you regularly communicate progress towards actions to your regional partners. I know that outcomes will be hard to measure at this early stage and recognise that you are future-focussed. But where progress towards outcomes can be measured, I expect you to demonstrate how your RSLG activity has supported and will continue to support regional workforce and skills needs over time.

I expect MBIE officials to use your regular RWP progress updates to brief me on overall RSLG progress in February 2023. I expect your refreshed RWPs, to be delivered in mid-2023, to show progress towards your current RWP actions.

RWPs are not your only mechanism for informing local labour market actors. Regular information, such as Local Insights Reports (LIRs), provide a regular opportunity to communicate strategic workforce and skills opportunities and challenges to your region, as well as to me and to government agencies. I expect you to continue to produce these at least quarterly. I also encourage you to think of other regionally-tailored ways that you can collect, develop, and disseminate information to your regional labour market.

Shape local solutions

I am fortunate to have you as high calibre and diverse regional leaders on RSLGs. I expect you and your RSLG members to draw on your regional networks and connections to champion regional solutions. I also expect you to use these local networks to increase awareness and connections to relevant central agency regional initiatives.

As we know, regional solutions to regional challenges are often not only more nimble than national solutions, but they are also likely to be more targeted and enduring. RSLGs do not have a delivery function, but they do have a coordination (or partnership) role. As such, I expect to see RSLGs shaping local solutions by supporting and coordinating local actors and promoting collaborative solutions.

This said, I expect you to avoid duplication by being aware of relevant existing initiatives and programmes in your region and have evidence that there is a gap to be filled before pursuing a solution. I also expect you to look for examples of 'best practice' from national programmes, other RSLGs, and initiatives in other regions or places, that could be applicable to your region. Your MBIE secretariat and Regional Public Service Commissioner can support you with this.

Influence Government decision makers

Your regional priorities and labour market analysis will help guide the Government and central agencies in the development of labour market and skills policy and initiatives. Both your RWPs and LIRs are a valuable source of regional insight to inform Ministers and agencies about the skills needs of your region and the regional impact of national policy changes. Beyond RWPs and LIRs, I encourage you to provide this insight via the MBIE secretariat, in consultations on policy or programme development.

RSLGs are part of a broader suite of workforce planning and vocational education reform initiatives introduced by this Government, including Workforce Development Councils, Industry Transformation Plans, the Employment Strategy, and associated Employment Actions Plans. I expect you to continue building connections in this space and exploring the

ways in which collaboration can increase your ability to influence labour market planning decisions.

I also expect you to continue to represent a strong and coordinated viewpoint on what the skills needs are in your region, and to produce useful advice to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in making its skills and training investment decisions. But the TEC is not the only lever for the RSLGs to influence regional training provision: building strong relationships and information flows with your region's education and training providers, will ultimately result in a more responsive system for the future of your region.

Occasionally you may identify an issue or gap that you want to raise at a national level. I expect that you will have explored regional options and gathered evidence to demonstrate that this is a system-wide issue, rather than one that is more appropriately addressed at a regional level. Where this is the case, I expect you, with support from the MBIE secretariat, to engage with government agencies to gain an understanding of related work underway nationally, and how you can support that work.

I will continue to support you in my role as Minister for Social Development and Employment

RSLGs play a highly valuable role in helping to better coordinate our labour market at a regional level and increasing the alignment of decision making by employers, workers, education providers, and agencies. I will continue to support you and champion your work in both my role as Minister responsible for RSLGs, and as the Education, Employment and Training (EET) Ministerial group co-chair.

I will make myself available to meet with you on a regular basis on matters of importance to you and use the regional information that you provide, and your RWP progress updates, to stay informed on key workforce and skills planning issues in your region.

In partnership with the Minister for Regional Development, I expect MBIE officials to ensure that alignment with RSLG regional workforce and skills development priorities is considered when Regional Strategic Partnership Fund proposals are received.

In addition, I will guide agencies alongside my EET Ministerial colleagues, and colleagues from other relevant portfolios, to consider your regional workforce and skills priorities in the development of their own priorities and initiatives.

This Letter of Expectations fits within the overarching mandate set through the binding Terms of Reference that you have been provided. I will provide you with an updated Letter of Expectations annually, to ensure that the expectations that I set reflect the progress that you make each year and remain aligned to the Government's strategic priorities.

Thank you again for the incredible work you have completed since inception of the RSLGs. I look forward to seeing the results of your continued dedication to uplifting your regional labour market.

Kua tawhiti kē tō haerenga mai kia kore e haere tonu. He nui rawa ō mahi kia kore e mahi tonu

Yours sincerely,

Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for Social Development and Employment