

## TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS

**More employers in the region are paying the Living Wage or above.** Wellington hospitality company Kāpura now guarantees its 800 staff the Living Wage or better. Countdown has also ratified a collective agreement that includes adoption of the Living Wage. The Living Wage is the hourly wage a worker needs to pay for the necessities of life and participate actively in the community and is calculated independently each year. It is currently \$23.65 per hour, well above the adult minimum wage of \$21.20. Payment of the Living Wage will put more money in the pockets of our lowest paid workers, and help those companies retain staff in a competitive labour market. More information is available [here](#).

**Pacific peoples' community leaders are concerned about Pacific students falling engagement in education.** Throughout the pandemic, increasing numbers of young Pacific people have interrupted their study to help earn money for their families. Now, a growing number have lost sight of their aspirations and are no longer pursuing education pathways. Community leaders believe a whole household approach is needed to increase engagement. Older generations need support to understand the learning pathways, so they can support their schools and their young ones to continue learning.

**Two major infrastructure projects are set to begin in the region.** In Porirua East, work on roading and water infrastructure will lay the way for development of 2,000 homes. In Hutt Valley, [RiverLink](#), the Valley's largest ever infrastructure project, is now calling for tenders. Both of these projects require tenders to show how they will achieve good social outcomes for the community in conjunction with the project. This approach will drive opportunities for local businesses and open good skills development and career pathways for local people, creating benefits for the region well beyond the life of the project.

**Work in the region's residential construction is slowing, but the commercial construction sector remains robust.** People with residential construction and trades skills need minimal retraining to transfer their skills to the commercial sector, and many are making the move. This flexibility will help retain these high demand workers in the region.

## TRENDS AT A GLANCE



**73.7%** of the region's working age population is in paid employment, an increase of 2.4 percentage points from September 2021. Although the underutilisation rate has dropped to 7.8% in September 2022, there remains 27,000 people who would like more paid work.



**6.6%** of the region's 15 - 24-year-olds are not in employment, education or training (NEET). This is a drop of 1.4 percentage points compared to last year, however, there are still 4,800 young people who are NEET.

Source: NZ Stats, Household Labour Force Survey, September



**The Wellington region has seen strong growth in annual average hourly earnings**, increasing 6.0% over the year to June 2022 compared to the more moderate growth of just 1.1% across all regions.

Source: NZ Stats, Household Labour Force Survey (Income), June 2022.

## REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

- A recent social procurement event brought together large organisations and Māori businesses.** The event was designed to increase access to Māori business and boost better business and employment outcomes through social procurement. The event was hosted by [Amotai](#) and [Te Matarau a Māui](#), and attracted almost 200 people. It brought together local government, central government and local corporates, who together are preparing procurement of over \$32 billion of goods and services to be delivered over the next 5-10 years.
- Wellington's digital technologies sector is starting to soften.** Remote working has enabled people and businesses to extend offshore more easily. Capital investment in start-ups is beginning to dry up as rising interest rates increase risk and make other investment options more attractive. This softening could threaten future growth and innovation in this important sector of our region's economy, with implications for local employment.
- In Kāpiti, work is under way to develop a cluster of artisanal food and beverage producers.** This will combine niche production and visitor experience and stimulate growth in jobs in food manufacturing and in the visitor sector. Infometrics has forecast an increase of 484 manufacturing jobs in Kāpiti in the next five years and an equal number in visitor services.
- KiwiRail's workforce is growing** following an \$8.5 billion investment in the company. It is offering good jobs in the track area, on the job training, and good opportunities for young people to enter the sector and develop skills. Kiwirail's public transport partner, TransDev Wellington, is also looking for more staff to operate the region's passenger trains. Current staff shortages are likely to cause more train cancellations in the weeks ahead.
- A new Jobs and Skills Hub has been announced for Lower Hutt.** MSD has approved a proposal by Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce, Hutt City Council, mana whenua and partners. The proposal is supported by Wellington RSLG, and the Hub will help people into training and connect employers and workers to fill 1,000s of jobs in infrastructure and construction over the next 10 years. The Hub will open in 2023.
- Wairarapa's "Waihealthskills" group has begun a recruitment drive in Canada** to attract GPs and health workers to the area. They are also planning support for new recruits and their families, including exploring local employment options for partners. This will help much needed health professionals settle well and stay in the region.
- Business Central has refreshed and expanded Job Search Connect**, its free job matching service that connects employers and members of ethnic communities. The service aims to help more people participate in employment and assist employers to develop inclusive employment practices.
- Plumbing employers want practical support for their apprentices to complete their training.** In the last two years apprenticeships have been disrupted and delayed (some by as much as two years) impacting earnings. Now that Skills Org's delivery responsibilities have moved to Te Pūkenga, employers are seeking prompt solutions to support their trainees to catch-up and complete their apprenticeships\*\*.
- Wairarapa continues to experience a gap between demand and provision of vocational training in the primary sector.** Young people are coming into the primary sector but there's still limited provision of higher levels of vocational training available locally. Young people are required to leave the area for higher levels of training.

\*\*Te Pūkenga acknowledged the disruption, and noted they are currently undertaking a review of the programme. This includes delivery options for on-job, online and campus-based training and assessment to deliver longer term industry training solutions that are focussed on meeting employer and learner needs.

## REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN UPDATE

The RSLG will lead and coordinate implementation of the [Regional Workforce Plan](#) over the next three years. The Plan contains nine actions that will be delivered through thirty-eight activities. In the year ahead the RSLG is beginning activities that help maximise the available workforce, build connections and support young people. Members of the RSLG have formed project groups and are currently preparing project plans to guide our work.



### Maximising Workforce

- encouraging the use of social procurement arrangements to increase sustainable employment opportunities for seven priority communities (action 3).
- engaging with government procurement and working with Te Matarau a Māui and local government partners (action 3).
- commenced planning to open employment opportunities for disabled people in the region's councils (action 6).



### Building Connections

- Working with sector stakeholder groups in the primary, health, infrastructure and construction sectors (action 1).
- Mapping workforce planning activity in these sectors.
- Connecting with the Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) that serve each of these sectors.
- Participation in a Māori health workforce hui led by Te Rau Ora to better understand the priorities of Māori health leaders for the Māori health workforce.



### Supporting Young People

- Initial information gathering to establish a regional youth caucus (action 1).
- Partnering with the Wellington Regional Leadership Impact Group to map, align, coordinate, and develop education to employment support in the region (Action 6).