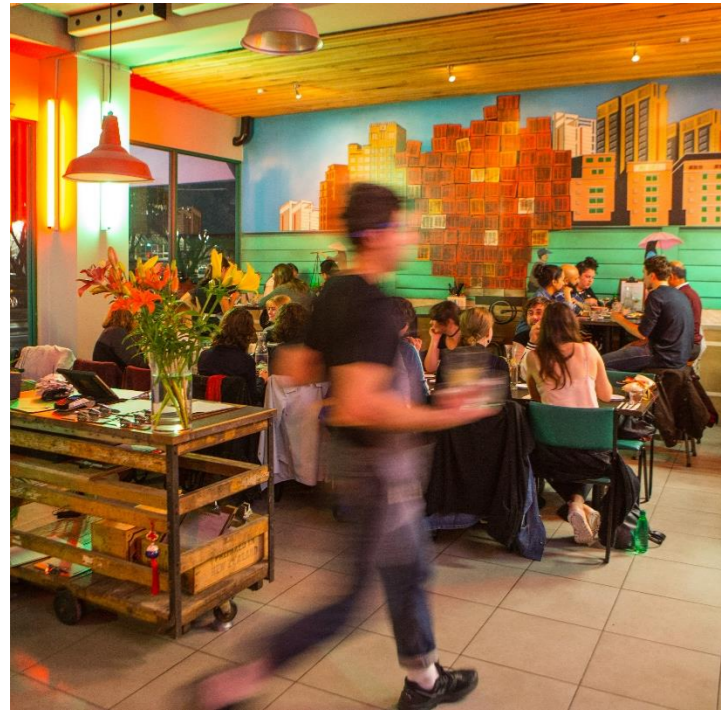


TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



Overall, Wellington region's employment situation is looking positive. The region's employment rate has grown further to 74.3percent, 0.7percentage points higher than March 2022. Fewer people are receiving Job Seeker support from MSD, and the number of young people 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET) has dropped since March 2022, to 7,600. On the other hand, many people working part-time (less than 30hours per week) have indicated they would like to increase their hours of work (13,000 people underemployed in March 2023, compared to 12,200 in March 2022). Source: Stats NZ Household Labour Force Survey.

Immigration is easing the pressure of skills and workforce shortages in some sectors. The total number of migrants working in the region grew by 9.3percent in the year to February 2023, to 24,363, however this remains lower than pre-Covid levels. In the last year, more migrants filled roles in health, manufacturing, the primary sector and computer system design and related services. The construction sector remained steady and there was a significant drop in the number of migrants working in accommodation and food services. Source: MBIE migrant employment data by region to February 2023.

High visitor numbers boosted Wellington region's visitor economy this autumn. The hospitality sector has been busy, and in the hotel sector occupancy has been strong, driving ongoing demand for staff. Online job advertisements in Wellington region's hospitality sector grew 4.4 percent in the quarter to March 2023, and 29.8percent in the last year. Source: MBIE Jobs Online, March 2023 (Highlight of Quarterly Trends in New Zealand Online Job Advertisements). Visitor numbers to Wellington City and region are forecast to grow with the opening of Tākina Convention and Exhibition Centre in June. The visitor sector is a priority sector in the Regional Workforce Plan.

The outlook for the region's construction sector is concerning industry leaders. Demand for residential construction has dropped and there are already changes in the workforce. Some firms are no longer offering new apprenticeships and employers are exploring ways to retain or redeploy experienced staff. There also are worrying signs of a slowdown in commercial construction. Demand is primarily driven by government and council projects, but public funds are under pressure, and schools and universities are stopping building for the time being. In this environment, it will be important to maintain the skills pipeline through big projects, such as RiverLink, and to find ways workers can transfer skills across construction and infrastructure projects.

REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

A new engineering academy will open at Naenae College in June, supporting students to study skills for engineering and gain up to 27 credits at Level 2. The course will include topics such as workshop health and safety; engineering materials; use of hand and power tools; measuring, welding and light fabrication; and work experience. It will prepare students well for apprenticeships in Hutt Valley's manufacturing businesses. The initiative is the first of its kind, with training delivered by Te Pūkenga - UCOL and hosted by the school. It is the result of collaboration between Hutt Chamber of Commerce, Hutt City Council, the Ministry of Education, UCOL and Naenae College, with support from the regional public service commissioner in response to the Wellington RSLG Regional Workforce Plan.

Pacific leaders have completed a business case to build 300 affordable homes for Pacific peoples in Porirua, in partnership with Ngāti Toa. The project includes plans to open skills development pathways in construction and infrastructure. Once established, it will open significant opportunities for Pacific peoples' employment in Porirua, and later in Hutt Valley and Wellington. Construction and Infrastructure are priority sectors in the Regional Workforce Plan.

Three new centres of research, science and innovation will be established in Wellington region. The announcement highlights the opportunities for people with skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). STEM skills also open the door to many technical and professional jobs in our region's manufacturing, digital, health, primary, construction and infrastructure sectors. The Regional Workforce Plan seeks to increase enrolment in STEM subjects at school, so our school leavers are well prepared to take up study and work opportunities for these key sectors in our region.

Cyclone Gabrielle has severely damaged farms in eastern Wairarapa. Whole crops were wiped out and there's been significant damage to land and infrastructure. Many farms cannot be insured and access to capital is a problem. Farmers report the sector is more despondent than ever, and mental health in the community is severely strained. The primary sector is a priority sector in the Regional Workforce Plan.

Wairarapa community leaders report a shortage of mental health workers in their community. Mental health is a massive issue in the area, but people are finding there is no-one to refer clients to, and the community is looking to regional leadership for support. Health (kaiāwhina to nursing) is a priority sector in the Regional Workforce Plan.



REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN UPDATE

Wellington RSLG is coordinating implementation of the [Wellington Regional Workforce Plan](#). The plan has five focus areas: maximising workforce, skills development, building connections, thriving workplaces, and supporting young people. Alongside this work, the RSLG has provided advice to the Tertiary Education Commission regarding investment in tertiary education in 2024 and has been updating the Regional Workforce Plan.



Maximising Workforce WellingtonNZ

- RSLG and Workbridge are finding ways to open employment opportunities for disabled people in the region's councils (Action 6).



Building Connections

- Preparations are under way to bring together a group of regional construction and infrastructure leaders to in late July (Action 1)
- Peers in local government involved in workforce planning and economic development are now meeting regularly. These meetings help participants share information and best practice, coordinate initiatives, and connect sub-regional workforce efforts (Action 1)



Supporting Young People

- A new 'equity coordinator' position has been funded to increase support for young people moving from education to employment in the region. This will focus on the needs of young Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people and former refugees, recent migrants and ethnic communities (action 6 e and f). Focus Futures will provide this service, and this marks the completion of a partnership project between the RSLG, Wellington Regional Public Service Commissioner and the Ministry of Education.