

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



The Manawatū – Whanganui Region remains relatively insulated from the impacts of COVID-19 and recent Alert Level changes, however existing challenges remain. The region is not reliant on any one sector, which continues to benefit the region. Opportunities in sectors such as Dairy and Construction have flow on effects to other sectors, and ultimately increase participation in the labour market.

The beginning of two regionally significant projects has highlighted the need for local talent, however this has been slower to develop than envisioned by the region. The Te Ahu A Turanga: Manawatū Tararua Highway and the movement of the P-8 / Number 5 Squadron to Ohakea are both multi-year projects that offer many benefits. However, there are concerns emerging that the majority of the works are being conducted by bringing in labour from outside the region. Initiatives are underway to develop and understand the broader outcomes of these projects and how the region can capitalise on these.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



70.4% of working age people on main benefits in the Manawatū – Whanganui region have been on a benefit for more than one year.
(Source: Ministry of Social Development)



39.4% of the working age population on main benefits identify as Māori. New Zealand European people account for 45.1% of those on a main benefit.
(Source: Ministry of Social Development)



27% increase in the median house price year-on-year (February), with the average time to sell only 24 days.
(Source: Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ))

TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- The Get-Go initiative was launched in Horowhenua December 2020.** The programme takes students through employment experiences at local businesses to help them develop work-ready skills. This will enable a strategic and tactical approach to the labour market in Horowhenua.
- Business confidence is increasing as a result of the recently announced 15% increase in dairy price.** It is expected to have positive impacts and flow on benefits to the dairy and horticulture sectors by increasing farmers cash flow. This is expected to result in them employing more people and investing in skills development.
- The Te Ahu a Turanga Project is recruiting, beginning with the highly skilled roles such as engineers.** This project is working on the Manawatū Tararua Highway and it is set to provide work for up to 360 people at any one time.
- Tertiary enrolment levels are high, and are bringing a new cohort into the regional labour market.** There is an increase in new graduates going back to do post-grad as they are not able to get jobs in their field due to the impact of COVID-19. These domestic students are providing a pool of talent for the region to draw on.

TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- The shortage of available labour is being felt across all sectors.** Many businesses report they cannot find enough suitable staff; both in terms of skill level and attitude. Some businesses are turning down work due to labour constraints, and there is concern what this will mean for the future pipeline of work.
- Drivers Licencing remains a barrier for those wanting employment, and employees wanting staff with this qualification.** In particular there is a shortage of people with Driver Licencing Classes 4/5. These take years to gain and training needs to begin now in order to meet future demand.
- Many small and medium-sized businesses are reluctant to take on apprentices** for a range of reasons. There is a large underutilised youth population that is being affected by this lack of opportunity.
- Housing constraints remain an issue for the region.** Lower prices of housing as a drawcard for highly skilled people is starting to wane as low supply causes prices to rise. Lower paid workers are missing out on rental properties as demand for accommodation increases and prices rise (particularly in Palmerston North).

THE MANAWATŪ - WHANGANUI REGION



OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Developing a comprehensive labour market model which showcases District variation.
- Stakeholder mapping including the establishment and strengthening of regional connections.
- Developing a Regional Coordination Action Plan.