

TOP REGIONAL IMPACTS



Employers appear more likely to recruit from underemployed communities. More former migrants and refugees are gaining part-time work, increased hours, or full time employment. These roles span across the skills spectrum from cleaning and retail, through to IT and business services.

COVID-19 has facilitated more flexible working arrangements and this is helping to remove barriers traditionally faced by disabled workers. This will improve outcomes for such employees, help to mitigate skills shortages, and increase diversity in the workplace.

Organisations that provide job-search support are experiencing greater employer demand and success in placement. The partners of skilled migrants bring very valuable skills and experience that are often overlooked. Through this job-search support they are transitioning into employment.

Māori business networks are growing with new networks being established in Wairarapa and the Hutt Valley. The Māori in Business Wairarapa Facebook page is actively connecting and supporting local Māori businesses. It is providing a platform for local reach and collaboration.

EMERGING ISSUE: COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

There are significant employment and logistical implications for COVID-19 vaccinations. The PSA has signalled an emerging issue for employers and employees around how vaccination requirements and proof thereof will be managed.

There is a potential tension between the rights of workers and the need for employers to manage workplace safety. Workers have the right to refuse medical treatment; to privacy of medical information; and not to be discriminated against. This needs to be balanced against the employers need to manage the risks inherent in particular workplaces, and the general expectation that people will be vaccinated (and will be able show evidence of this).

COVID-19 requirements could mean changes to existing employment conditions and contracts. While other vaccination requirements currently exist in some sectors and roles, the scope of COVID-19 effects mean there are significant issues to be considered.

There will also be logistics challenges with the vaccination role out. Very high numbers of staff are needed over short time periods to provide vaccinations. This will have ripple effects on the health industry provision of other services.

LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- 1. Government plays an important role as a significant employer in the region.** It is a good employer of people with disabilities and has the potential to support employment and skills development for communities and sectors. The Working Matters Disability Action Plan of 2020 sets out a plan of action for 2020 to 2022 for closing the gap for labour market participation of people living with disability. A key part of the plan is providing information and support to employers.
- 2. Skills in te reo Māori are in demand.** Skilled te reo Māori speakers are being recruited to government jobs, but potentially at the cost of local communities.
- 3. Recruitment companies are playing a more active role in connecting traditionally underserved groups such as partners of skilled migrants with employers.** Personal connections make a difference and meeting with a recruiter has opened the door to employment.
- 4. Employers in the construction sector are offering language support to apprentices.** This is opening skill development opportunities for people who speak English as an other language and helping to fill labour shortages. Collaboration between the sector and language service providers are investigating how they can better assist busy employers to support literacy, numeracy and other needs of apprentices
- 5. The Growing People pilot programme launched in Wairarapa's primary sector in late 2020.** The programme is designed by industry leaders in the district, and aims to grow essential management and communication skills. It is likely to be transferrable to other sectors in the region.

LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- 1. More job losses are anticipated in Lower Hutt with a significant packaging employer set to close.** The iRSLG is following up to gather any further details.
- 2. The potential trans-Tasman travel bubble is concerning the construction sector and may also impact other sectors.** Construction employers are worried that when the borders reopen people with much needed skills may move to Australia where pay rates are higher.
- 3. Apprenticeships may be at risk if there is a downturn in the construction sector if the current boom tapers off in the short to medium term.** A future downturn in the construction sector would leave large numbers of apprentices unable to progress in their career due to a lack of work. This would have a major impact on these youth.
- 4. Stigma and misplaced employer assumptions continue to be a barrier to employment for some groups of people in the workforce.** This means that workers with disability, English as an other language, and other groups are often shut out of employment. Employers are overlooking this untapped potential, and the opportunity to diversify their workplaces.

THE WELLINGTON REGION



OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Preparing the foundations of the draft Regional Workforce Plan.
- The makeup of the region’s potential workforce and characteristics of regional workforce demand.
- Workforce needs of key sectors.