

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



The Horowhenua District is experiencing sustained growth due to public and private investment in the District. With significant projects underway economic growth is only being constrained by levels of available talent. These projects include the Ōtaki to North of Levin Expressway, Tara-Ika Subdivision, and the Muaūpoko Kura Ā Iwi Business Case being accepted. Beyond these projects, Employers in the District are continuing to comment that their business growth is constrained by the lack of available labour, with the majority of highly-skilled roles being sourced outside the region.

Housing availability and cost continue to be barriers felt throughout the region. With businesses struggling to recruit talent (particularly higher-skilled roles), there are increasing reports of instances when suitable employees are having to turn down jobs due to not being able to find suitable housing. In the Ruapehu District some employers are including accommodation in the employment offer, and in Rangitikei, Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa are providing accommodation on Marae to ensure that there is enough available labour to keep projects progressing.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



26% of immigrants in Manawatū – Whanganui on temporary work visas are employed within the primary sector. The majority of these workers are farm, forestry and garden workers, followed by farmers and farm managers.
(Source: Immigration NZ, May 2021)



7.5% of the working age population in Manawatū – Whanganui are JobSeeker Support recipients. The number of recipients has decreased compared to the same time the previous year (May 2020) and remains constant from April 2021.
(Source: MSD, Monthly Benefits Update, May 2021)



46.8% increase in the median house price for homes sold in Manawatū – Whanganui. Record median house prices were experienced in the Manawatū District (\$623,250) and Rangitikei District (\$451,250) in the month of May.
(Source: REINZ, Monthly Property Report, May 2021)

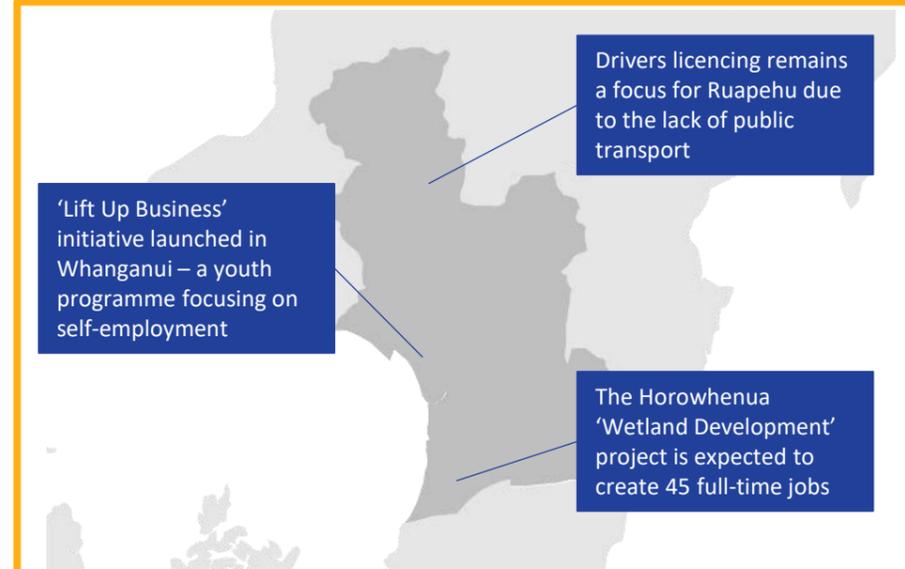
TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- 1. Recently announced Government investment in the region has resulted in increased business confidence.** With more capital works coming online, businesses are forward planning to estimate how this will influence consumer patterns and spend once the projects are completed.
- 2. Shorter, specific work readiness courses are being introduced by a few Private Training Establishments (PTEs) in Taranaki.** One of the main detractors for some people going on a Work Ready Course is the time commitment and broad range of topics covered. Shorter courses are being picked up at greater rates, and class sizes are increasing.
- 3. Planting season is beginning shortly in Taranaki, which will provide employment opportunities.** Both private enterprises, and large scale projects such as Te Ahu a Turanga (TAaT), have positions they are still looking to fill. These roles provide people with a pathway to learn new skills and reconnect with the whenua.
- 4. The Tara-Ika subdivision is in the early planning phases.** There have been infrastructure contributions from the government, and the first stage of Resource Management Act (RMA) considerations are underway. Tara-Ika will provide up to 2,500 new homes over the next 20 years.

TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- 1. Pay disparity between the public and private sectors, and Non-Government Organisations makes recruitment challenging for smaller organisations.** With demand for talent outstripping supply, smaller organisations and not-for-profits are struggling to recruit with the limited workforce budget they have to work with.
- 2. Young people attaining suitable drivers licencing remains a challenge,** as they are unable to regularly attend training and get to their jobs. In the absence of public transport and shortages in drivers licence testing officers, many young people are not getting their licences and are unable to secure employment as a result.
- 3. The Rural Sector are struggling to adequately recruit staff for roles previously held by migrants who have returned to their home countries.** The more rural the role, the more difficulty farmers and growers have in recruiting appropriate staffing. Some employers are still hoping to be able to bring in highly skilled staff from overseas for the next season.
- 4. Supply chain constraints are halting works as they are unable to get the necessary components to complete jobs already on the books.** The construction, engineering and manufacturing sectors are feeling this the most as they need to push back scheduled works by up to six months, as they wait for offshore components to arrive in the country/on-site.

THE MANAWATŪ - WHANGANUI REGION



OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Developing a Regional Coordination Action Plan
- Stakeholder engagement planning and execution
- Understanding the implications of refreshed Regional Strategies including Accelerate25

People Supply

- **The ‘GetGo’ Futures Day was held at the end of May in Horowhenua. Every Year-10 student (approx. 355 students) from around the District attended local businesses.** This created exposure for the students to a range of different career and job opportunities. Comprehensive health and safety inductions were given on-site, which helps instil a sense of the importance of H&S compliance / understanding / importance in the students which they will hopefully carry with them into employment.
- In Whanganui there was a specific example of a highly skilled technical operator that got a job with Farmlands Food (moving from Taranaki) but **he has had to turn down job as he couldn’t find any housing.**
- **Candidates that offered Expressions of Interest for employment in the TAaT Project are only being contacted now that their applications have been received and they are in the system.** This task has been outsourced to collaborative partners (eg Tararua REAP + Central Skills Hub) to complete. On the ground feedback is that after 8-months of no contact many of these potential workers are slightly disillusioned with the process.
- **The Muaūpoko Kura Ā Iwi Business Case has been accepted by the Ministry of Education.** This will result in a new Kura coming online in Horowhenua, for students Years 1-13.

People in Workforce

- Housing remains a challenge for staff and employers throughout the Region. **Rentals are in high demand and are at high cost.**
- **There is a critical housing shortage in Horowhenua.** The District is experiencing the highest rental increases in the Region over a short space of time.
- **Where high-skilled roles are filled, this is often by people outside of Horowhenua.** These people then need to secure appropriate housing, and get their children into local schools.
- **The COVID-19 vaccine rollout programme is going well in Horowhenua** (currently in third wave of the rollout). In Horowhenua this has been done in partnership with iwi who are directly involved in operating clinics for iwi, Pasifika and wider whānau members.
- Communication gaps have appeared due to some government departments and private services using different age brackets for ‘youth’. This has however **increased the collaborative planning taking place in Tararua to ensure youth that need assistance are able to get it.**

Jobs

- There are still plenty of jobs at both entry level/labour & skilled/technical jobs in Whanganui. **Most employers are struggling to fill roles.** Some of the larger industries are trying a shared workforce model to cover shifts.
- **Planting Seasons are starting soon – and there are still gaps in recruitment** for a few organisations in Tararua. The more rural the planting, the harder it is to find people as there are lots of other opportunities close to home.
- **There is a major shortage of trades people to cope with the demand.** The supply pipeline is lagging considerably in Horowhenua. Project Managers and Office Administrators are also in high demand.
- **Safe to Go Programme has just employed two more driving coaches** due to demand in Ruapehu.
- **The GetGo Digital Platform (get-go.nz) launched 3 June.** This is a tech platform designed to allow employers and talent to connect in a different way that is driven by how people are searching for jobs. This is a first for the Horowhenua District and there are exciting future developments planned for this platform.

Skills Development

- **A Digital Accelerator Programme will be running in Whanganui from July to September focused on Māori Rangatahi aged 17-19 years.** This is an example of another programme focusing on building skills with our young people in this District.
- The **Horowhenua Learning Centre are partnering with Wayne Bishop Construction to offer additional apprenticeship opportunities** that are available now to students.
- **UCOL are currently reviewing their curriculum** to ensure that they are providing an offering that meets the current need.
- **Iwi are building and strengthening pathways with colleges in the region to better connect students with opportunities coming online with some of the large infrastructure projects in the region.** For example through the Ōtaki to North of Levin Expressway project students can get exposure to roles within infrastructure, RMA considerations, ecology etc. The focus is around leveraging partnerships to identify and strengthen pathways for students.
- At least six government agencies are **providing funding related to drivers licencing** in some way in Ruapehu.

Employers

- **Large infrastructure projects are still trying to ascertain their recruitment needs (TAaT/Route 52).** Despite a look to push recruitment in October we still don’t have actual employment number forecasts, or even the type of roles and skills likely to be required.
- **Increased business confidence in Horowhenua** is leading to workers receiving more hours, and more jobs coming online.
- **Employers are continuing to comment that the lack of available talent is constraining business growth in Horowhenua.** Businesses are unable to meet BAU, let alone grow. There is a greater call to better support employers to find the right people for the available roles across all sectors and skill levels. This is constraining economic and social growth for Horowhenua.
- **More Tararua organisations are turning to Facebook to advertise jobs for free** as traditional paid recruitment options (job search websites, local paper) are not providing much of a return on investment.
- Some employers are still under the illusion they can simply advertise for a position and a job seeker should be happy with whatever that employer has to offer. **It seems they are yet to realise that supply and demand dictates they need to make their vacant role and organisation sound enticing to attract suitable talent.**

Demand Drivers

- **The Ōtaki to North of Levin (Ō2NL) expressway was announced by the Government.** This is a 24km highway costing at least \$817mil and will result in large investment into Horowhenua and surrounding towns. Due to the size of this project a specific approach to skills and talent will be required.
- **The Free and Healthy School Lunch programme has created approximately 100 jobs** across Taranaki, Whanganui and Manawatū to the end of Term 1 2021 (this level of employment is expected to continue until end of Term 1 2023).
- **Lots of development is occurring in the space of Marae development and Pasifika Churches through previously announced PGF funding.** This is helping to create additional jobs within construction and supporting trades.
- The Ministry for the Environment and Horizons Regional Council have announced the purchase of 142ha of former farm land (at a price of \$6.7mil). It will be used for **development of a wetland, which is part of a wider plan around the restoration of lake Horowhenua.** This development project is expected to create up to 45 full-time jobs over four years.
- **Jobs for Nature projects (through the Department of Conservation) are going through the final approval process.** Many of these large scale projects are expected to begin shortly, all of which are within the Taiao space and will require suitable resourcing.

KEY

People Supply (School Leavers, Work Transition, People not in the Workforce, Migration)

People in Workforce (Environment, Intentions, Responses, Challenges, Trends)

Employers (Environment, Intentions, Responses, Challenges, Trends)

Skills Development (Tertiary, Apprenticeships, Work Ready, Other Education and Training)

Jobs (Conditions, Standards, Recruitment, Vacancies, Trends)

Demand Drivers (Economic Trends and Development, Project Stimulus, Sector Trends)