

## TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



Image: Graeme Murray

**Downer (a prominent infrastructure company) reports that they have been able to consistently recruit in the Ruapehu District.** This is influenced by returnees from Australia wanting to move back to family in the region, as well as people being displaced from other industries due to Covid-19. Downer are also set to advertise for new staff as they continue to grow their business through their Taumarunui branch.

**A green hydrogen fuelling station is planned to be located in Palmerston North, which will also provide employment opportunities.** It is part of Taranaki-based [Hiringa Energy's \\$50 million investment](#) to build four stations across the North Island. Supported by a \$16 million loan from the government, it is hoped this initiative will be a step towards decarbonising New Zealand's heavy vehicle fleet.

**Te Ahu a Turanga have renewed calls for applicants to their Civil Infrastructure Apprenticeship Programme.** Apprentices will join their Earthworks team and learn how to operate heavy machinery. Te Ahu a Turanga will be speaking to senior students/school leavers about this opportunity at some local Tararua high schools in November.

## TRENDS AT A GLANCE



**71% labour force participation rate**, which is up from 68.5% at the same quarter the year prior. This is a 2.5 percentage point increase.



**2.7% unemployment rate**, which is down from 4.7% at the same quarter the year prior. This is a 2.0 percentage point decrease. The Māori unemployment rate for the region is 4.7%.



**11% NEET rate** for 15-24 year olds, which is down from 16.6% at the same quarter the year prior. This is a 5.6 percentage point decrease.

*(Data from Household Labour Force Survey, September 2021)*

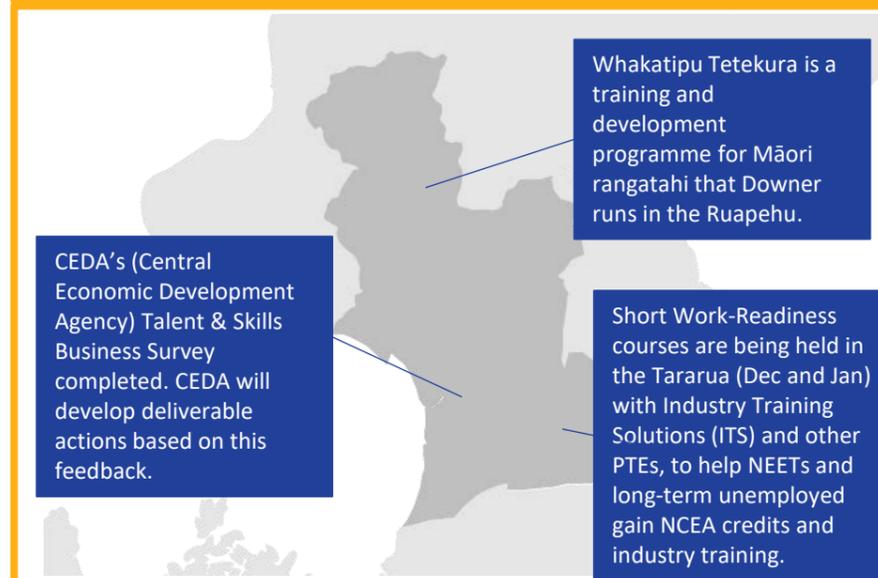
## TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- Local iwi Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa have seen a 37% increase in rangatahi applications for jobs coming through their space.** This is predominantly because Year 13s who are choosing not to sit their exams are actively looking for work. Ngāti Apa are also running Employment Preparedness Workshops for rangatahi to put them in front of prospective employers.
- The Workplace Trainers Network had a great turnout to their introductory breakfast in Whanganui.** The goals of this network are to identify worker skills that will impact the future of business and the region's economy; assist businesses with training and recruitment decisions; and provide networking opportunities.
- Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs has launched their National "Think Rural" campaign** giving funding and support to people willing and able to move to rural communities, including the Tararua, Rangitikei and Ruapehu regions. This is an effort to attract workers given that rural areas often struggle to fill vacancies from a limited pool of labour.

## TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- There is a shortage of people available for general labour hire from personnel agencies who fill workforce gaps on a short term basis.** Personnel providers are unable to fill demand as it is becoming a real hurdle to find people, due to a limited pool of labour.
- Whanganui has a low rate of second dose vaccinations (71.4% at the time of writing) and there are workers expecting to lose their jobs.** This particularly affects those working in the health and education sectors but also other pockets across the workforce such as labourers in the meat industry.
- Labour and skills shortages have been highlighted across roles in the infrastructure and construction sector,** including roles that have been vacant for as long as six months. Some businesses are saying they are not doing quotes or tenders because they know they will not have the workforce to deliver on that work. Consequently, businesses are unable to grow as they are unable to hire new people.

## THE MANAWATŪ - WHANGANUI REGION



## OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Confirmation of the first two sectors to be included in the Regional Workforce Plan, with sectors for the following years identified.
- Beginning stakeholder engagement about priority sectors and aspirations.
- Understanding and appreciation of existing regional strategies and plans in identified sectors.

## People Supply

- **The Rangitikei region is experiencing a shortage workers across different sectors.** The horticultural industry report that they are still short on pickers, while key meat processing plant ANZCO needs 70 more staff members for their operations.
- **Anecdotally, job seekers in the Tararua have lost momentum from the latest lockdown and have ‘thrown in the towel’** for the rest of the year as the Christmas period approaches.
- **A Manawatū business in the area of fibreglass fabrication and other composite materials have said that they could take on up to 15 more staff members** if they could find them. Instead they are needing to turn work away.

## People in Workforce

- **Twenty-three new arrival workers from the Cook Islands have come to the Rangitikei region to work in the meat industry.** Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa are accommodating new migrant workers for ANZCO with full residential care.
- **Employment Support Workers and Community Connectors in the Tararua are receiving enquiries almost daily regarding vaccination mandates.** Enquiries are frequently coming in from the health and education sectors, as the mid-November deadline for first vaccinations looms. People in other industries are also starting to prepare CVs and look for employers that might be willing to hire people that choose not to be vaccinated.

## Jobs

- **Mayor’s Taskforce for Jobs (MTJF) in the Rangitikei placed 24 people into employment** last month (October). MTJF has also placed 22 people into employment in Ruapehu since July.
- **Careerforce has seen a marked increase in the number of apprentices in the Community Facilitation area within the Tararua.** Careerforce is the Transitional ITO for the Health and Wellbeing, Youth Work and Cleaning Industries. Apprenticeships include Community Facilitation, Disability Support, Social Services, Youth Work, and Mental Health & Addiction Support.
- **Tararua Alliance are finalising some temporary to permanent roles, which will largely fill their labour needs for the Huarahi Tuhono project.** They have work for some sub-contractors available in the New Year. However, given that it is sub-contract work, it is unlikely to result in additional employment.

## Skills Development

- **Two induction sessions have been completed regarding work for the Whanganui Port project.** These were run by the Port Employment Precinct, alongside Te Pūwaha partners, Horizons and Te Mata Puau. Content included Te Awa Tupua and cultural components.
- **A new Rangitikei partnership formed between Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa and Kiwi Can Do,** to deliver micro-credential programmes that go directly into employment. Out of this partnership has come a residential programme where participants live on site for a week or two depending on the micro-credential.
- **Planning has finished for the Tupoho Toi Te Mahi programme, which will result in 48 apprenticeships over two years in Whanganui.** Run through Tupoho Investments Limited and supported by the Māori Trades and Training Fund managed by the Ministry of Social Development, this programme is projected to begin in February 2022.

## Employers

- **Silver Fern Farms have increased their minimum entry-level wage from \$21/hr to \$24/hr.** They are now providing transport from Woodville, through Dannevirke (Tararua), and on to Takapau (Southern Hawkes Bay) where they are based. These initiatives are a response to feedback received from the community and to address their demand for labour for the 2021-2022 season; Silver Fern Farms announced in September that they were looking for 150 new staff.
- **The Pākihi Māori Summit was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November.** This was an opportunity celebrate Māori business owners and build stronger connections. The Pākihi Māori Summit aimed to further develop Māori entrepreneurs in Whanganui.
- **CEDA facilitated the first Infrastructure and Construction Collective Action Group Workshops.** Industry and relevant agencies worked collectively on solutions to maintain, develop, retain and grow the workforces needed.

## Demand Drivers

- **Tenders are currently out for the North Mole construction work in Whanganui.** They are expected to be awarded by early December, with the North Mole construction commencing early 2022.
- **Te Puna Hāpori project is a collaboration between the Ministry of Justice, the New Zealand Police, local Iwi and Council in Whanganui** that will include a courthouse facility, police station and other services. The first stage of this project will involve the demolition of the aging Whanganui Central Police Station. The exact number of jobs that will be created is not yet known, and the Ministry of Justice is meeting with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to discuss job creation further.
- **Work on the Marton Rail Hub is still progressing** and Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa are working with this project to provide the employment outcomes needed to support this venture.

### 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)