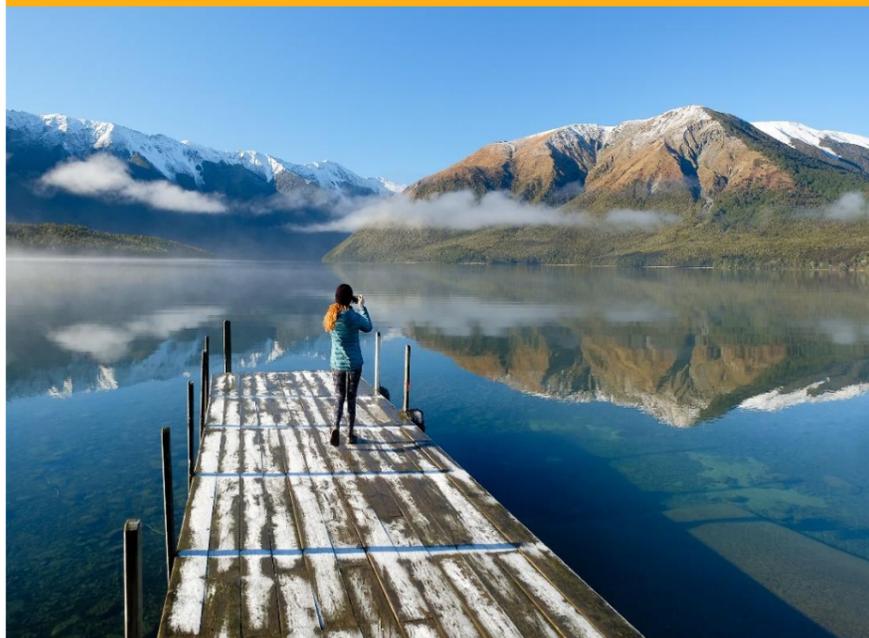


## TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



Many businesses are stretched trying to navigate the new COVID-19 'Traffic Light' system, and report that navigating responses to the different levels has been the most stressful part of COVID-19 to date. Uncertainty and increased levels of monitoring have been reported as having a greater negative effect than Alert Levels 2 or 3.

Employers are anticipating that vaccine mandates and requirements to show vaccine passes will start to result in loss of staff and customers. Although the affects from COVID-19 and the Delta strain in particular are having minimal effect on Ministry of Social Development (MSD) benefit numbers at present, this is anticipated to change as unvaccinated workers see out their paid 4-week notice period. Requirements to be vaccinated are beginning to cause division between workers and those who either support or oppose compulsory vaccination.

Employers concern is growing as they consider the future viability of their businesses. There are increasing concerns of the compounding affects of loss of staff and customers, alongside increasing monitoring and compliance costs, and ongoing supply chain issues. There are fears this will result in long-term low productivity, and how this will affect the region now and in the years to come.

## TRENDS AT A GLANCE



1,280 / 2.9% The increase in filled jobs, between October 2020 – October 2021.

25% of the increase in filled jobs over this time are for people aged 60 years and over.

Source: Stats NZ, Monthly Employment Indicators



-440 / - 12.1% The decrease in the number of people receiving a Jobseeker benefit from MSD, between November 2020 – November 2021

Source: MSD, Monthly Reporting



416 The number of migrants on Employer Assisted Temporary Work Visas, as at December 2021. Of these, 20% are working as Chefs.

Source: Immigration New Zealand

## TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

1. **Te Pukenga is interested in utilising the Nelson-Tasman, Marlborough, West Coast Regions to test its newly defined Operating Model.** They are investigating how practical training initiatives being delivered through the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology and Tai Poutini could be used to demonstrate how the proposed model works in reality.
2. **Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) are generally just getting on with it and proving to be fairly resilient,** as COVID-19 Relief Payments have allowed for a lot of continuity of business. Although there is some concern that it will get harder to recruit volunteers, especially for organisations that require vaccinations, there are hopes that this success can be applied to other businesses.
3. **The recent arrival of COVID-19 in the region is providing businesses opportunity to prepare for new ways of working before the busy summer season starts.** It is hoped that this 'lead in time' will help to mitigate negative effects on activity and business across Summer, which many businesses are relying on for survival.
4. **The 'Pick Nelson Tasman' campaign will be run again from 17 January to attract staff for the harvest season.** This year has seen increased financial commitment and efforts from a larger number of employers in recognition of the tight labour market conditions.

## TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

1. **Employers and employees are being distracted by the uncertainty of COVID-19 and are losing motivation.** All business activity and planning at present seems to be being overridden by the uncertainty of the capacity of the region to accommodate higher case numbers; and the concern that case numbers will be further inflated once the borders begin to open.
2. **Many businesses are finding it challenging to navigate the Traffic Light settings and requirements.** Some businesses seem to be excessively monitoring staff and customers vaccination status which is affecting operations and resulting in higher costs. Other businesses report uncertainty on determining their Risk Assessment and would appreciate a local contact centre able to provide advice.
3. **Requirements to be fully vaccinated are dividing staff from each other, and from their employers.** It is resulting in the loss of key staff, which is having the double effect of creating a shortage of labour, but also removing their experience and ability to lead from the workplace. The levels of division and tension continue to increase across all sectors and communities, as unvaccinated customers are unable to patronise favoured locations if those businesses are unable to adjust to contactless operations.

## THE NELSON-TASMAN REGION



## OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Consulting on and preparing the draft Regional Workforce Plan