

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



Taranaki continues to have a buoyant labour market, with the possibility of new roles in the emerging low emissions energy sector exciting many. While there is still some uncertainty around what these roles will be, training providers and industry are working together to create certainty. This sentiment is backed by the provision of training from the Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT) and their desire to establish an Energy Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE).

Fonterra's decision to move away from mandated vaccinations for staff is receiving mixed reviews. As part of their business continuity planning they have adopted daily Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) to minimise the risk of staff shortages reducing production at some sites. Although this will enable the firm to retain unvaccinated staff and maintain production rates, some vaccinated staff are concerned around the implications of this for their health and wellbeing.

Venture Taranaki has recently commissioned a report to identify and support the emergence of niche sectors in the region. This includes areas such as nurseries and floriculture; food related manufacturing and growing; and a range of manufacturing specialities and specialist services. The emergence of new sectors is exciting and provides a range of potential employment opportunities across a range of skill levels. However, for the region to fully maximise this opportunity the workforce and training requirements need to be determined in order to support these niche sectors – and the RSLG is in a position to support this work.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



16.4% gender pay gap, which is the greatest pay gap nationally, followed by the Bay of Plenty at 12.8%. In Taranaki the median hourly earnings for women is \$24.98 compared to \$29.87 for men.

Source: Integrated Data Infrastructure, as published by the Ministry for Women



18.5% of jobs advertised in the region since the beginning of 2022 have been in the Health Sector. The next sector with the highest advertised recruitment needs are Logistics and Hospitality at 8.3%.

Source: Ministry of Social Development, adhoc reporting



73% of youth (16-24 years) who are MSD Clients within the region are in the 20-24 years age bracket. This statistic is consistent with the higher rate of youth who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) across the region.

Source: Ministry of Social Development, adhoc reporting

TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- High demand for qualified Instrument Technicians in the Energy Sector is opening doors for some workers to move roles, and others to upskill.** Some employers are putting qualified electricians with a few years of experience through this training however, demand remains for those already qualified in this speciality to change employers or locations.
- Technology advancements within the Energy Sector are bringing the possibility of new employment opportunities to the region.** With companies such as Azura and Copenhagen Group looking at alternate energy developments in the region, there is the potential for more roles such as Marine Engineers, Structural Engineers and Design Engineers within the Energy Sector.
- Project Maunga (Taranaki Base Hospital Redevelopment project) continues to create employment opportunities for people in the trades and specialist trades areas.** As this project nears completion of the new Renal Unit and Energy Sector, and ground gets cut for the New East Wing Building (NEWB), qualified trades people and environmental specialists continue to play key roles. The NEWB will be the country's first hospital building to be 5-star Green Star certified and the Renal Unit will be one of the world's first net zero energy healthcare buildings.
- Smaller towns and community providers are continuing attraction campaigns for qualified personnel across the healthcare sector.** Nurses, midwives and doctors remain the professions in highest demand.

TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- Personnel that are Hazardous Area Trained are in high demand in the Energy Sector, however there is very limited provision of this training in the region.** This makes recruiting staff a challenge and puts additional pressure on those with this qualification to complete work in required timeframes. Overwork and pressure from employers are leading to the risk of burn out of the limited number of staff, which would further increase the risk within the sector.
- The lack of healthcare provision in some towns and districts (such as within Stratford District) is a barrier to people taking up employment.** While a long-standing issue, recent resignations within some towns and districts has led to the loss of large amounts of medical personnel, increasing wait times for standard medical appointments by over a month. This has resulted in people turning down jobs as they identify the provision of adequate healthcare essential to their decisions about whether to move or not.
- The cancellation of regional events such as WOMAD and AmeriCARna for the second year in a row is costing both revenue and jobs across the region.** It is estimated these cancellations have cost the hospitality industry between \$10-15million in much-needed projected revenue. It is another blow to the already struggling hospitality industry with some laying off staff as a result of these event cancellations.
- Unions are reporting that employers are struggling to meet recruitment needs** with potential employees citing low wages or bad hours as their reason for not applying. With the labour market remaining tight, those employers not willing to make changes to their current operating model are missing out on available talent in the region.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN

Development of the first Energy Skills Action Plan continues in partnership with Energy Resources Aotearoa and Te Pūkenga. This Action Plan is based on wide stakeholder engagement within the region and will reflect the short-term and long-term skill needs of the sector.

The Taranaki Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) have begun identifying actions and recommendations for inclusion in the Regional Workforce Plan (to be published in July). These are based on stakeholder engagement, data analysis and best practice models. The actions and recommendations are targeting the provision of skills and training initiatives, and the investment needed in the region. This iteration of the Regional Workforce Plan has a specific focus on the 'Food, Fibre & Whenua' and 'Energy' Sectors.

Two case studies have been identified for inclusion in the Regional Workforce Plan. These inspiring local initiatives will showcase the value of partnership between industry, education providers, and communities / whānau to provide opportunities and skills advancement.

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Stakeholder engagement focusing on the Energy Sector, in collaboration with Energy Resources Aotearoa and Te Pūkenga
- Identification and ratification of tangible actions and recommendations for inclusion in the Regional Workforce Plan
- Completion of the first Regional Workforce Plan