

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



Youngest lay vaccinators in New Zealand – 16-18 yrs. This image shows Rangatahi who have been working throughout the COVID response and are now community vaccinators for Te Whānau o Waipareira an urban Māori authority, in west Auckland.

RSLG Members have identified that ongoing support is needed for employers and employees. The Auckland Chamber of Commerce cites that the [First Steps](#) web site (part of the Activate Tāmaki Makaurau initiative), which provides wellbeing support/resources for business leaders, has seen 25,000 visitors to that site, with 15,000 resources downloaded in the past two months. Related personal wellbeing support services are stretched with public health waitlists up to six months and private Employee Assistance Programme service waitlists up to multiple weeks.

Employers and employees are making key decisions on how to maintain production and income under COVID-19 restrictions. These key decisions involve issues such as, employers seeking Australian workers, managing large regional Fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) distribution centres during staff absences, employee non-compliance with health guidelines, and non-reporting of positive tests through fear of losing income.

Anecdotally, RSLG members report seeing and hearing that school leavers are not pursuing further education, either due to NCEA non-achievement, or because of COVID impacts in households. One member reports that instead of an overseas experience, school leavers are electing to work for a year, “Its not a gap year that they are taking, it’s a PAYE year”. The RSLG is interested in local Iwi leadership which aims to support taura to gain credits that were missed, and to support their education through a local school/NZQA partnership.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



1,200 + Māori businesses are enrolled in the [Activate Tāmaki Makaurau](#) initiative. This is [approved](#) by The Hon. Minister Carmel Sepuloni and funded via the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment. The initiative supports businesses with:

- advice and planning support
- support to implement advice and planning
- health and wellbeing support
- business community resources



212 Māori owned business registered with Whāriki (the Māori Business Network) are construction sector related. This is the largest sector related group followed by employers in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sector at 108.

Source - [Whāriki](#)

TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

1. As a result of COVID-19, new roles and skill sets are needed within the region’s growing health sector. Tāmaki Makaurau’s health sector is the third largest employer in the region with an 8.9% share of the filled jobs and forecast to be 9.2% in 2027. Te Whānau o Waipareira (a large local community health and social services organisation), has partnered with St John, a national health education provider, to develop and deliver an initial micro-credential for their staff. This rapid form of upskilling will enable Te Whānau o Waipareira to deliver a range of bespoke health solutions to their communities in short notice if needed, and is seen as a model to scale.
2. In the face of shifting skills demand, [micro-credential](#) programmes are popular [globally](#) and starting to be used here, to deliver tailored, just in time training on the job. The NZQA micro-credentials register describes [224 micro-credentials](#) that have been approved, alongside [Edubit micro-credentials](#) which are fast and easy to set up (but not NZQA approved). For example, there are seven NZQA-approved micro-credentials for construction and health education, with many more Edubits. There remain untapped opportunities in these priority workforce development areas, and other industry sectors, to increase uptake of these flexible and effective tools. Employers have welcomed the MBIE Pacific Skills Shift Initiative, which uses micro-credentials.

TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

1. An RSLG member has reported that, the opening of the Australia/NZ border may see a net brain drain (especially in the ICT sector), rather than a brain gain. Workers seeking higher wages and affordable living conditions may migrate.
2. The region’s rangatahi, our future workforce and skilled labour, is at risk of not entering tertiary education due to the effects of COVID-19 impacting student NCEA achievement. Taura may enter work that is low skilled with limited potential to upskill or they may become complacent and not complete NCEA qualifications. The RSLG will be working with a newly formed Regional Public Service group ‘Rangatahi Learning and Wellbeing’ and will be feeding the insights of RSLG members into the Ministry of Education’s ‘Tāmaki Makaurau Engagement and Attendance Strategy’.
3. The RSLG sees the need to develop a rangatahi/employer initiative to help school leavers to complete their NCEA qualifications. This is important because rangatahi may already be enticed to stay in low skilled work due to the attractiveness of the wages they are receiving. This could also involve employers helping youth to achieve other educational outcomes such as industry/NZQA qualifications. The upcoming [Unified Funding System](#) changes may offer support for employers to do this under the ‘Assessment and Verification’ mode of funding, which should come in 2022.

TERTIARY EDUCATION

- MIT/Unitec enrolments for 2022 are down by double figures compared to the 2021 year. This is the result of a combination of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, the tight labour market, and secondary school students not completing sufficient NCEA credits in 2021 to qualify. On a more positive note, Nursing and Construction enrolments remain strong and are in line with last year.
- The RSLG is concerned that lower student numbers for 2022 in tertiary study, including vocational education, could see a cutting of courses and laying off of teaching staff under tertiary funding rules at the same time that large skill gaps are being identified by the RSLG and other groups.
- The Trades Training Apprenticeship Funding expires at the end of this year (2022), with students reluctant to enter multiyear programmes as a result.
- The Private Training Establishment (PTE) peak body [QTI](#) foresees a challenging 2023 for the PTE sector. The upcoming tertiary education funding changes, tight labour market and learner reluctance to further education, are blowing towards the formation of a ‘perfect storm’ which will challenge the resilience of a number of PTEs, especially for those with thin operating margins. “The worst case scenario would be a ‘slow down’ in the PTE sector when what is needed is a ‘pick up’ to fuel the ‘skills’ demand in the labour market.”

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

The group is focussed on the development and publication of the ‘Tāmaki Makaurau Regional Workforce Plan’ in mid-2022, and is currently working with regional partners to finalise content and shared actions.