

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



A Tairāwhiti hydraulics business is collaborating with Hanga Aro Rau WDC to develop a fluid power (hydraulics) qualification. This time last year things were looking pretty bleak for Gisborne Hydraulic Services, who were struggling to retain their existing staff or recruit new staff, as there were no clear pathways (apprenticeship or otherwise) into the hydraulics industry within the region. Now, discussions with the WDC about a specific fluid power qualification have moved from the ‘why’ to the ‘how’. This is good news for Gisborne Hydraulic Services now, and potentially in the future, as thoughts turn to the possibility of creating a national hydraulics training academy in Tairāwhiti.

Tūranga Ararau is preparing to deliver the new Whakatiputanga Ngahere programme in Tairāwhiti. In February 2022, the CARE RSLG provided an ‘update’ report on the delivery of a locally designed Diploma level forestry management programme in Tairāwhiti. The report highlighted that for several years students from Tairāwhiti wanting to progress their careers in forestry management and leadership roles had to commit to moving to Rotorua. We are glad to announce that NZQA have recently approved the application made by Tūranga Ararau (Iwi Tertiary Education provider of Te Rūnanga o Tūrangānui ā Kiwa) to deliver Whakatiputanga Ngahere in Tairāwhiti in 2023.

Public sector agencies are collaborating to lift engagement in education or training across Tairāwhiti in response to low rates of school attendance, both prior to COVID-19 and more recently. With many of the drivers of low engagement sitting outside the education system a cross-government approach to address these has been adopted. A key interest of this work is enabling education engagement as a significant contributor to enhancing lives and livelihoods.

The Gisborne Chamber of Commerce is supporting Tairāwhiti businesses to improve well-being in the workplace. In June the Chamber had a focus on ensuring that business owners have the tools and skills to deal with their mental health and that of their employees. The Chamber compiled a Wellbeing Resource kit which identified a couple of local initiatives – Mates of Tairāwhiti and Awhi Analytics. Mates of Tairāwhiti is a workplace mental health and suicide prevention programme. Awhi Analytics is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered solution that gathers real-time experienced wellbeing insights and automates impact reporting so that workplaces can keep on the ‘pulse’ of how their staff are feeling.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



Both the labour force participation rate and the employment rate have continued to decline (to 62.2 and 59.6 percent respectively) with year-on-year drops for the March quarter and the lowest rates in the country for each measure. In contrast, both the Total NZ labour force participation rate and the Total NZ employment rate have increased over the same period, reflecting the high demand for labour nation-wide.



The unemployment rate has decreased to 4.2% (down 1 percentage point from 5.2%) compared to March 2021. This compares to a Total NZ unemployment rate of 3.2% in March 2022.



The number of young people working has increased. The average number of youth aged 15–24 years that were working at some point between January and March 2022 showed a 6.9 percent increase compared to the same time in 2021.

Source: RSLG Labour Market Report - March 2022, statistics sourced from the Statistics NZ Household Labour Force Survey.

Note: With a small population, Tairāwhiti’s quarterly results will include a larger sampling error range, so long-term trends should be the focus as they will give a better view of the direction that the true figures are moving.

TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- The forestry sector is calling for more domestic processing of Tairāwhiti logs**, to address the frequent boom and bust cycles that affect the region. More domestic processing will build resilience in the sector, as well as creating more high value jobs for Tairāwhiti locals.
- The CARE RSLG is partnering with industry to investigate the opportunity to develop a bespoke qualification in advanced manufacturing.** Industry 4.0 and other technology-based companies in Tairāwhiti, including Wood Engineering Technology Gisborne Ltd. (WET), use a range of digital technologies to enhance the performance, output, monitoring and control of manufacturing processes – for example WET produce a new structural timber ideal for building houses. An opportunity exists to design a qualification around WET to support the entire region’s workforce planning and the associated delivery of skills and training to meet the labour force demands of innovative, cutting-edge Industry 4.0 and technology-based companies.
- The latest tranche of advanced digital skills graduates is ready to enter the workforce.** In 2020, Orawa Ltd. started delivery of a programme that trains locals to gain advanced digital skills (coding), with the goal of getting them employment in the region. Support from MSD, the Dev Academy and Tāiki eI, Tairāwhiti’s first impact house, has contributed to the success of the programme. Orawa Ltd. is now calling for more support from Tairāwhiti businesses to help match these graduates to jobs available locally, so that they don’t have to leave the region.

TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- Highly skilled workers continue to leave the region as competition increases.** At least one manufacturing business has reported highly skilled middle management staff have left the region for improved job opportunities elsewhere. Pultron Composites, acknowledges the impact this has on their business, but they also confirmed they will continue to develop their people to fill the gaps. They say there is still room to improve the skill level in the region, however more collaboration and sharing of resources is required, both within and across sectors.
- A perception persists amongst many local businesses that employee attraction is hampered by housing.** It is noted that the housing shortage has now eased a little with increasing reports of people being able to find rental accommodation and some even purchasing houses. However, business confidence remains low, with ongoing reports that lack of housing continues to be the primary barrier to staff attraction.
- Delivery of the Level 5 Diploma in Screen Production has stalled.** Rāngai Studios creates high value job opportunities for rangatahi in Tairāwhiti and is particularly interested in supporting Māori who would otherwise not be engaged in any other formal training or employment. In 2021, they partnered with EIT to deliver a Level 5 Diploma in Screen Production, however due to a range of challenges, including staffing challenges and COVID-19, it has not been possible to deliver the programme in 2021 or 2022. Rāngai is now seeking to formalise support to deliver the programme in 2023.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN

The Tairāwhiti Regional Workforce Plan was launched at a Future of Work event in Gisborne on Monday, 11 July 2022. The event was hosted by Rau Tipu Rau Ora, Tairāwhiti’s regional leadership body, and attended by Hon Grant Robertson, Hon Kiri Allen, and Hon Meka Whaitiri.

This plan builds on the foundation of Tini ngā hua maha ngā huarahi, Creating Pathways, Workforce Development Plan 2021. It is the region’s next step in growing a skilled workforce that is relevant to local industry and employment opportunities. The plan is focused on 3 sectors:

- Vertical construction
- Manufacturing
- Digital technology

The plan calls for greater ownership when it comes to growing skills in the region. It identifies actions to build the Tairāwhiti workforce by supporting improved education and training opportunities, and identifying and filling quality, well-paid and high value employment options now and into the future.

The Tairāwhiti Regional Workforce Plan is available on the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment website at mbie.govt.nz/tairāwhiti-rslg.

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Begin work on the implementation of actions in the Regional Workforce Plan
- Initial scoping of focus areas for the next Regional Workforce Plan