

## TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



**Plans for a \$75 million events hub in Stratford are moving at pace** with the projects first land purchase complete, and initial designs released. The new hub 'Stratford Park' will see the existing Speedway and A&P showgrounds expanded into a multi-function venue for activities such as motorsport, equestrian, showgrounds and concerts. With 40 to 45 people involved on the project board, the committee are currently liaising to assess the needs of all interested parties including representatives from iwi and Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT).

**Recruitment challenges have reached the highest level seen within the last 10-years**, according to the Venture Taranaki Business Survey published in June 2022. Of the participants that completed the survey, 48 percent indicated that they were experiencing significant skill shortages or difficulties recruiting appropriate staff. Fifty percent of respondents indicated they were looking for more staff – but are not confident they can find the right people to fill their skill needs.

**Meat processing companies are being impacted by the combination of COVID-19 and winter illnesses.** ANZCO Foods reported staff illness was compounding existing labour shortages and having an increased impact on production. ANZCO Foods is based in Taranaki and produces all the McDonald's meat patties eaten in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. It is seeing recent absenteeism levels of up to 20 percent at its Eltham plant, and 17 percent at the Waitara plant.

## TRENDS AT A GLANCE



**The number of MSD clients aged 15-64 years across Taranaki has fallen by 330 people from June 2021-June 2022.** In the month of June 2022, 9,456 people received a main benefit.

*Source: Ministry of Social Development*



**The largest age cohort receiving a main benefit are aged between 30-34 years**, with 1,148 recipients in June 2022. The next largest cohort are aged between 25-29 years, with 1,132 recipients and the third largest cohort are aged between 60-64 years, with 1,096 recipients.

*Source: Ministry of Social Development*



**Manufacturing, Construction, and Health Care and Social Assistance remained the top three sectors for employment in 2021**, totalling around 21,000 workers (35.5% of the regions total employment).

*Source: Infometrics, Structure of New Zealand's Economy*

## TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- A new partnership has been formed to help generate the workforce needed for the \$300m stage 2 development of the Taranaki Base Hospital.** It is a collaboration between WITT, Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), and Project Maunga. Current WITT students in the Construction Management and Architectural Technology programmes will be given opportunities to complete internships with the firms while they are studying; and future WITT graduates will have the opportunity to gain apprenticeships with firms involved in the build.
- Venture Taranaki has announced six new community-based science projects**, funded through the Curious Minds Taranaki programme. The projects focus on environmental issues, wellbeing, and mātauranga Māori science. They involve partnerships with community groups, schools, and local hapū. With these new contracts Curious Minds Taranaki can continue to support local businesses to innovate; engage communities with locally relevant quality learning outcomes; and develop a more skilled workforce and more responsive science and technology sector.

## TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- Staffing shortages and COVID-19 impacts continue to cause closures for local businesses.** One local hospitality business has had to close its doors due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. Although this business has redeployed its employees across other hospitality businesses to ensure their continued employment – it does little to address the overarching pressures on the wider sector.
- Willingness of workers to swap shifts in order to cover for those off with the COVID-19 or the flu is diminishing** as it becomes an expectation of employers. This is mainly being reported in firms who employ workers on 12-hour shifts, and employers believe fatigue is a major factor. Where employers offer incentives such as pay rises, additional paid time off and over time rates, there is a willingness to continue to work different and extra shifts because workers feel valued.
- Tegel Foods production at its Taranaki plant has been reduced by up to 40 percent.** The production line has been hit especially hard by illness, and it has been reported that staff absences can be up to three times higher than usual, which is compounding existing labour shortages. Although Head Office staff joining the line has helped to temporarily make up the shortage, the drop in production is not only affecting Taranaki but is also having big impacts down the supply chain to other regions.

## REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN

- The Taranaki Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) launched their Regional Workforce Plan (RWP) with support from Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment** on July 5, 2022. The RWP focuses on the 'energy' and 'food, fibre and whenua' sectors of Taranaki's labour market.
- The Taranaki co-chairs newsletter is an opportunity to keep up to date with the mahi that the RSLG are undertaking** and to hear about the progression of the Groups actions they identified in their RWP. If you would like to sign up to receive these newsletters please contact [Taranakirslg@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:Taranakirslg@mbie.govt.nz).
- Taranaki RSLG farewells Simon Singh (CEO, HQ Group) and Dan Epiha-Netana (Regional Organiser, First Union) and thank them for all their hard work and contributions to the RLSG.** With this we welcome Glen West (Business Operations Manager, Toi Foundation) as our newest member of the Taranaki RSLG.

More information about the Taranaki RSLG and the RWP can be found [here](#).

## OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Looking into the challenges and opportunities that other sectors are facing locally, to make an informed decision on where the RSLG should focus their efforts for the coming year
- Working with stakeholders to progress actions that make up part of the Regional Workforce Plan