

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH



Credit: Marlborough Boys' College

These are challenging times for our rangatahi with COVID-19 interrupting their education, impacting mental health, and leading to increased rates of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) and youth unemployment. The community, industry and government are responding with a range of programmes and initiatives.

Forestry at Marlborough Boys' College provides a practical, hands-on course supported by the industry. Marlborough Forestry Industry Association and Smart + Connected Forestry have donated chainsaws and PPE. They also funded industry experts to teach the students and provide them with the knowledge of job opportunities within the forestry industry.

A new Māori Trades and Training project launched in April. Te Tautoko Ora – Mahi Whakaara supports young Māori aged 15-24 to learn skills that will help them work in a trade through courses in building, painting, forestry and support programmes of Te Ao Māori and Foundation Tertiary Learning.

Marlborough college pupils had hands-on experience of aquaculture through the Marine Farming Association 'on water' days. Delivered as a joint initiative with Marlborough Chamber of Commerce, students and teachers travelled the Sounds on an industry vessel, visiting mussel and salmon farms to learn about the huge range of careers in aquaculture.

Kennedy Florence is pursuing a career in mechatronics here in Marlborough thanks to Career Navigator. The programme, run by the Graeme Dingle Foundation Marlborough, matches industry mentors with senior college students to help them decide what to do when they leave school. Kennedy was paired with three mentors and connected with sawmill business OneFortyOne at the Future of Work conference. She is now an engineering apprentice there studying mechatronics - the intersection of mechanical, electrical, and computer engineering.

The Aotearoa Youth Employability Conference 2022: Uniting for Change featured a Marlborough Regional Hub. Hosted by the Marlborough Youth Trust, the conference gave Youth workers, NGOs and the RSLG a day to discuss the challenges and opportunities for assisting our rangatahi in Marlborough.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE

2.2%* Unemployment rate: the lowest unemployment rate in the country for the March 2022 quarter (*this is an estimate only as the sample size is too small).

6.5%^ Underutilisation rate: fell compared to the same time last year, giving Marlborough the lowest rate in the country for the March 2022 quarter. (^The long-term trend over the decade continues to remain steady at around 11-12 percent, indicating this quarterly low is likely an outlier).

Source: Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey, March 2022

1,215 on Jobseeker Support March 2022. Since COVID-19, Jobseeker numbers peaked in September 2020 at 1,491 and have since declined. Jobseeker numbers are still higher than pre-COVID levels, as there were 945 on Jobseeker Support in December 2019.

342 Māori on Jobseeker Support March 2022. Māori Jobseeker numbers peaked at 474 in September 2020. Pre-COVID, 288 Māori were on Jobseeker Support in December 2019.

558 Work Ready Jobseekers, numbers peaked at 909 in September 2020, but are still higher than pre-COVID levels, there were 492 Work Ready Jobseekers in December 2019.

657 Jobseeker - Health Condition or Disability, numbers increased from 453 December 2019 pre-COVID. The largest increase is in Psychological conditions, from 228 in December 2019 to 315 March 2022. This mirrors feedback from stakeholders about high levels of anxiety and mental health issues in general.

Source: MSD, Benefit facts sheets Regional Councils data tables - March 2022

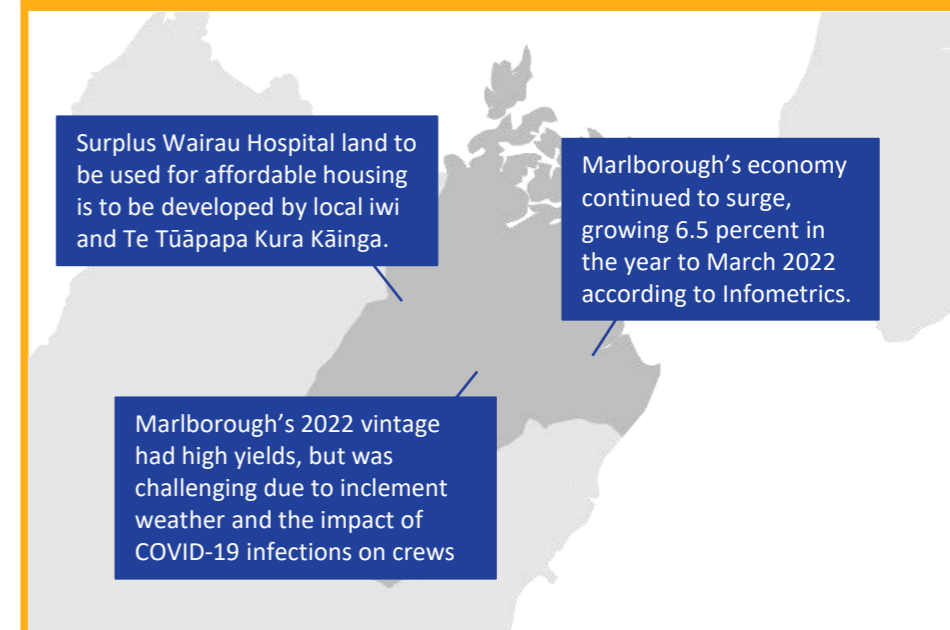
LABOUR MARKET ACTIVITIES

- **Muka Tangata Food and Fibre Futures Hui was held in Marlborough in May.** The Workforce Development Council (WDC) for the food and fibre sector ran this hui to get advice on the drivers for change and the big issues that will impact the sector over the next 10-years. This work will shape future-focused vocational education and training and contribute to Workforce Development Plans.
- **'Make it Marlborough', the support local campaign returns.** The Marlborough Chamber of Commerce worked with Council to bring back the campaign to support the Marlborough hospitality and retail industries. As mentioned in the [April LIR](#) hospitality has been hard hit by staff shortages and spend was down.
- **Tech week made an appearance in Marlborough.** Marlborough Innovation Day showcased speakers from leading Marlborough Agri-businesses who shared the innovative work they are undertaking. It was an opportunity to share and discuss the problems that are limiting their productivity and to discover the potential solutions.

LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- **Aged residential care providers are experiencing difficulty recruiting staff due to the housing shortage.** It is difficult for aged care staff to buy homes due to high prices, and the lack of security with rentals means people have to move and it is hard to find affordable rentals if a tenancy is lost. Many aged residential care staff are migrants, and lack of housing is a disincentive to move to Marlborough.
- **Recruiting professionals continues to be a challenge.** Firms advertising roles sometimes receive no applications, or only from those overseas. Good candidates who want to take up roles in Marlborough are sometimes put off by a perceived lack of job opportunities for spouses/partners and/or an inability to find affordable housing.
- **A quarter of all households are one person and this is expected to increase to one third by 2043.** A Council survey showed there is demand for housing other than traditional three bedroom houses. Blenheim's population is ageing rapidly, in 2018 22 percent were aged over 65, compared to 15 percent of New Zealanders. By 2048 a third of Blenheim residents will be over 65. The survey investigated future housing needs based on ability to pay. A majority prefer a standalone dwelling, but allowing for affordability, over a third were willing to consider a higher density form of housing such as a townhouse, duplex or apartment.

THE MARLBOROUGH REGION



OUR FOCUS UNTIL 30 JUNE:

Producing the first Marlborough regional workforce plan.