

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS



The loss of over 100 jobs at Ruapehu Alpine Lifts indicates the tourism sector is struggling, impacted by a poor snow season, COVID-19 and workforce shortages continuing in the region. This highlights a wider issue with staffing shortages leading to reduced business hours and further impacted by limited transport options in the region. Visitor experiences are being negatively impacted despite the efforts of providers, causing negative net economic impacts on remote districts such as Ruapehu and diverse industry such as accommodation and retail. The community, Ministry of Social Development and Ruapehu District Council have responded swiftly, looking to redeploy workers through their established workforce networks. The success of this redeployment is a testament to the nature of these workers being readily mobile and adaptable, as well as employers recognising the transferability of skills within the sector.

A 10-week pilot program that will support visibility and entrance into the healthcare workforce for Rangatahi. The program is targeted at Year 9-11 students to facilitate early exposure to a range of roles available in the health sector for rangatahi and will act as a pathway to other educational support programmes that focus on Sciences and Health Sector initiatives. This is a collaboration between Central Economic Development Agency (CEDA), Whatu Ora, Whakapai Hauora and the Ministry of Education. The Rangatahi Health and Hauora Academy Pilot program has been developed in a phased approach that will first support the Palmerston North City district, with a view to deliver to other districts across the rohe.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



2,300 more people are employed in Manawatū-Whanganui compared to the same time last year. The current employment rate is 67%, compared to 66.3% the previous year.



Māori unemployment has decreased by 2.7% since June 2021. The long-term employment trend for Māori in Manawatū-Whanganui is positive. Over the decade, the Māori unemployment rate continued to decrease while both the employment and labour force participation rates showed slow and steady increases.



Over the decade the rate of youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) has continuously decreased and the NEET rate for the 15-19 years and 20-24 years cohorts are starting to converge. The 20-24 years rate is decreasing over time. This quarter there were an equal number of youth not in employment, education or training, totalling to 4,100 youth NEET.

Source: NZ household Labour Force Survey – June 2022.

TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- The Mayors Task Force for Jobs programme in Horowhenua is being redeveloped.** The programme will enhance the opportunities for unemployed (and especially rangatahi not engaged in work or learning) to be placed into sustainable employment. The Horowhenua District Council are working alongside Get-Go, Muaūpoko Tribal Authority, Ngati Raukawa, Horowhenua Learning Centre and other social agencies and Work-Ready programmes.
- Local procurement initiatives are creating new employment opportunities in the region.** An example is Ruapehu District Council are collaborating with Inframax Construction and Recreational Services in a review of land transport service delivery arrangements. The contract for District Road Maintenance and Resurfacing was awarded to Inframax Construction and they ran Job Expos and 'Meet and Greets' in the Ruapehu area in August to attract local kaimahi to the civil construction sector. The company are continuing to seek local kaimahi to fill various roles throughout the district, for example quarry management and construction contract managers.

TOP LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- The increasing cost of living is forcing many Tararua residents to search for roles closer to home.** Commuting to larger centres is no longer financially viable for many, and as such these residents are looking to work from home or are seeking work within the district.
- Current levels of access to driver licence training and testing has been highlighted as inadequate to support a mobile workforce**, particularly in the rural communities. The lack of drivers licencing has exacerbated the feeling of disconnection in rural communities. AGC Training for Industry have implemented an upskilling policy to combat the lack of training provision, which provides training, funds, and support to their students who are on their restricted licence to progress to a full licence. However, this will only meet part of the demand, and more action is needed.
- A lack of forklift licence training staff is hindering new training provision around the rohe.** Businesses have noted issues surrounding training provision for forklift licencing, with a key emphasis on the lack of trainers available in the region. A key challenge for training providers when looking to expand training provision will be finding and retaining training staff.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN

The Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) launched their Regional Workforce Plan on 8 July 2022 at Te Matapihi - Bulls Community Centre. Additional launches were held in Dannevirke and Levin in early August.

The next phase of mahi for the Regional Skills Leaderships Group focuses on progressing the actions within the Regional Workforce Plan. The group is gathering information in relation to labour and training challenges for our next focus areas including:

- Freight, Logistics & Warehousing
- Seasonality sectors

The Manawatu-Whanganui Workforce Plan is available here: mbie.govt.nz/manawatu-whanganui-regional-workforce-plan

If you would like to discuss the plan with a member of the Secretariat, please get in touch with us at: ManawatuWhanganuiRSLG@mbie.govt.nz

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

- Working alongside UCOL and Massey University to progress the actions related to Kaiāwhina Health training provision and recognition of prior learning.
- Development of a Regional Training Directory as part of progressing the actions related to School Transitions in the Manawatū-Whanganui rohe.
- Connecting with representatives of Freight Logistics and Warehousing and Seasonality sectors.

People Supply

- **Border re-openings present both opportunities and challenges for Horowhenua.** The recommencement of the Recognised Seasonal Employer programme will provide a critical supply of workforce for the larger horticulture and food processing employers. However, there are concerns that the more mobile parts of the local workforce will leave to go (or return) to higher paying jobs overseas.
- **The first former refugees are expected in Horowhenua in October as part of the refugee quota programme.** Immigration New Zealand had planned for the arrival of the refugees in November 2021, but their arrival was delayed due to COVID-19. Council, local iwi, Get-Go and social agencies are working on the Welcoming Communities plan, which includes liaising with the Red Cross Refugee Work Broker to identify suitable employment opportunities when refugees are ready to begin work.

People in Workforce

- **All sectors remain short of kaimahi at all levels in Horowhenua.** Numerous hospitality and retail businesses have cut down operating hours due to staff shortages. However, much of this relates to a temporary shortage due to COVID-19 and staff isolation, along with flu and other illness.
- **The closure of Ruapehu Recruitment company has left local employers struggling to connect with potential kaimahi,** despite years of attempting to build networks across the region. Connecting local employers to a local labour pool and supporting small businesses in a tight labour market is likely to remain a challenge in the region.

Jobs

- **Tupoho are offering an opportunity to move into a trade apprenticeship through a 4-week training program.** The training program equips participants with soft and technical skills, cultural development, licensing and the required certification to support them through to employment. Participants will be supported by a team dedicated to empowering whānau in our community through education and employment.
- **A Local Job Expo organised by Inframax Construction in August in Ruapehu was a major success,** engaging local businesses with kaimahi to increase awareness of employment opportunities and career pathways. Inframax Construction are now committed to seeking local staff for their latest eight-year contract with the Ruapehu District Council.

Skills Development

- **Te Kete Hauora o Rangitāne (TKH) have been designing their youth development arm.** This includes developing a Rangatahi-focused advisory group that will directly inform TKH of what is required in the district. Through facilitated intensive group sessions they will help youth develop their own mana Motuhake that relates to employment and their life direction. The sessions will focus on a range of topics including Alcohol and Other Drugs, Healthy Choices, and Suicide prevention.
- **Principals at all three colleges in Horowhenua are reporting an increased need to engage young people in school.** Get-Go, with contribution from the Ministry of Social Development, has recently commissioned research to understand the expectations that employers have from young people newly in the workforce, or about to enter the workforce. This research will be the base for further work with local employers on how they can attract and retain young people.

Employers

- **Tararua REAP held a business breakfast to discuss and learn how they can shape the future workforce of the district.** They brought together over twenty-five local organisations and businesses at the Dannevirke Services and Citizens Club. Following this success, a second business breakfast will be held in Pahiatua on September 27th to network and discuss the state of local Youth Employment. This will be held in conjunction with Pahiatua Districts Business Group, Explore Pahiatua and Tararua REAP.
- **Inflationary pressures are continuing to affect businesses,** particularly increases in production costs. One business in the meat sector has noted they're being forced to forgo production of lower quality meat in favour of the higher quality cuts, as the marginal returns have declined for the lower quality meats. This is expected to have flow on effects for employment numbers as employer needs pivot due to changes in production cost.

Demand Drivers

- **The confirmation of funding for Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ) has provided relief and improved confidence and consistency** for local Tararua youth receiving pastoral support through this initiative. This year the MTFJ programme has supported 82 young people into jobs across more than 50 local businesses.
- **The increasing cost of power is becoming a large concern for households and businesses.** In the industrial space, some businesses coming to the end of their fixed-term power contracts are facing a price increase of up to 75% on renewal. Low-use charges were scrapped by the government earlier this year, which will see the 30-cent fixed daily charge on electricity double. Many households are now facing an extra \$110 per year to their average power bill because of this.

KEY:

People Supply (School Leavers, Work Transition, People not in the Workforce, Migration)

People in Workforce (Environment, Intentions, Responses, Challenges, Trends)

Employers (Environment, Intentions, Responses, Challenges, Trends)

Skills Development (Tertiary, Apprenticeships, Work Ready, Other Education and Training)

Jobs (Conditions, Standards, Recruitment, Vacancies, Trends)

Demand Drivers (Economic Trends and Development, Project Stimulus, Sector Trends)