

TOP REGIONAL IMPACTS



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Te Taihu iwi and Māori health providers in the top of the South have launched a research project to understand Māori experiences throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. It aims to reduce inequities for Māori in the local Covid-19 response by identifying gaps from a whānau point of view. A full range of challenges will be covered, including financial impacts through lost income or reduced hours at work; mental health impacts; conflicting views within whānau regarding vaccination; as well as access to services and support.

The health sector is experiencing a very tight labour market and the border re-opening has not yet made an appreciable difference. However, as Covid-19 infection rates have decreased there has been an increase in planned care, and staff taking well earned annual leave. Te Whatu Ora Nelson-Marlborough introduced a health care assistant apprenticeship programme, and some graduates of that programme are now going into nursing training. There are over 30 applications for 2023 apprenticeships including good numbers of Māori and Pasifika applicants. A school liaison position is also being trialled for 12-months, encouraging students to consider health careers and understand what school subjects they need for health related courses.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE

0.3%* Unemployment rate: the lowest unemployment rate in the country for the September 2022 quarter (*this is an estimate only as the sample size is too small).

Due to the small sample size there are no figures for Underutilisation or Youth (15-24 years) not in education, employment or training (NEET) for the quarter.

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

1,197 on Jobseeker Support September 2022. Since COVID-19, Jobseeker numbers peaked in September 2020 at 1,494 and have since declined. However, Jobseeker numbers are still higher than pre-COVID levels, as there were 945 on Jobseeker Support in December 2019.

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

606 Work Ready Jobseekers September 2022. Work Ready Jobseeker numbers peaked at 909 in September 2020. Work Ready Jobseeker numbers are still higher than pre-COVID levels, there were 492 Work Ready Jobseekers in December 2019.

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

ACTIONS UNDERWAY

- A new construction academy is being developed at Queen Charlotte College,** in partnership with Kāinga Ora. The academy, scheduled to be up and running in 2023, will enable local students to gain new skills and kick start careers in the construction industry. A key partner of the project is the Marlborough Chamber of Commerce through their Ministry of Social Development-funded education-to-employment broker, Chris Shaw.
- Aviation engineering training is relocating from RNZAF Base Woodbourne to nearby Omaka airport.** The move will allow NMIT/Te Pūkenga to continue their partnership with New Zealand Defence Force and expand the number and range of students who can study. NMIT/Te Pūkenga's aviation engineering programme is unique to Marlborough and the only course of its kind in New Zealand. Aerospace is a Marlborough economic strength with Airbus, Sounds Air, Defence and Omaka Aviation Heritage all based in the region. Aerospace is a priority sector in Marlborough's Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032 (MEWS) and the Marlborough Regional Workforce Plan (RWP). Marlborough aspires to be the Aerospace Training Hub in the Te Pūkenga network.
- The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) formally responded to Te Mahere Ahumahi ā-Rohe o Te Taihu o Te Waka-a-Māui | Marlborough Regional Workforce Plan.** They acknowledged the health workforce is under pressure and Marlborough's unique needs in viticulture, wine and aquaculture.

LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES

- Employers worry that the new median wage of NZD \$29.66 an hour, which will apply to relevant visas from February 2023, will put staff needing work visas beyond their reach.** From December 2022, most partners of temporary migrant workers will also need to qualify for their own Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV). Employers looking to recruit migrants believe this will have a serious impact on the available labour pool with couples and families less likely to apply.
- Farms and businesses are frustrated by a lack of road access in the Marlborough Sounds** following the July 2021 and August 2022 storms. The challenge of retaining and attracting staff was noted by the Rural Support Trust. The practicality of boating in and out may well put people off applying for positions, particularly families. These are turning into real, long-term issues for farmers and local businesses already affected by years of Covid-19.
- Marlborough's cruise ship season has started** with the arrival of the 4,905 passenger Ovation of the Seas into Picton. The return of cruise ships will bolster the tourism, hospitality and retail sectors that have been hard hit by Covid-19. However, many of these businesses have been struggling with labour shortages. Marlborough's Destination Management Plan 2022-32 notes the need to consider the seasonal impact on workers, staff availability and retention.

THE MARLBOROUGH REGION

Waka Kotahi are closing the main road between Blenheim and Nelson (SH6) from 1 November to 18 December, to make emergency repairs. Businesses on the road will be cut off from customers, forcing many to close during this time – impacting both workers and businesses. Students, workers and road freight will have to detour via SH63 adding significantly to the travel time.

2022 has seen the latest end to 'Winter' grape vine pruning ever, finishing mid-October. A shortage of labour, rain days and early bud burst all contributed.

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS:

The focus for the Marlborough RSLG is implementing *Te Mahere Ahumahi ā-Rohe o Te Taihu o Te Waka-a-Māui | Marlborough Regional Workforce Plan* [[Link to Regional Workforce Plan](#)]. A summary of the Year 1 (2022-23) actions for the six focus areas and five focus sectors can be found on the one-page [Marlborough Regional Workforce Plan summary](#).