

## REGIONAL INSIGHTS



The newly appointed Jobs and Skills Hub team welcomed Minister Sepuloni to Hawke's Bay on 24 May to break ground on the site of the new Building Futures Training Facility where the Hub will be co-located. The Jobs and Skills Hub is one of five Ministry of Social Development (MSD) funded hubs across the country that links candidates with construction and infrastructure employers and supports them into training. The team of six work with whānau to remove barriers to gain sustainable mahi in the construction and infrastructure sector and can support employers with their workforce development needs. The hub was established to support the \$1.1 billion worth of housing planned for the region and major infrastructure projects, but the scope has been widened now to support the workforce needs of the cyclone recovery and rebuild. The team will work closely with partner organisations including the local councils, Te Kahui Ōhanga o Takitimu, EIT/Te Pūkenga, the Hawke's Bay Regional Skills Leadership Group, and housing development stakeholders such as Kainga Ora and K3 Kahungunu Property.

Vertical Horizonz NZ (VHNZ) has made training more accessible by opening a new training centre in Hastings. VHNZ offers world class safety training to local organisations like Unison, Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga, Hastings District Council and the Napier Port. They deliver over 100 courses including confined space, gas testing, working at heights, first aid and mobile elevated work platform. Kānoa-RSLG secretariat staff have supported VHNZ with regional contacts and engagement to assist their establishment in the region and to help inform RSLG advice to the Tertiary Education Commission earlier in the year.

## CYCLONE GABRIELLE - SECTOR INSIGHTS

Work is underway to support cyclone displaced Horticulture kaimahi into construction and infrastructure roles. NZ Apple and Pears, MSD, Kānoa-RSLG, Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Pūkenga are working together to develop a picture of anticipated horticulture kaimahi displacements and cyclone related job opportunities in the construction and infrastructure sector. Small to medium growers are beginning to make decisions on business viability but are reluctant to let go of the teams they have spent many years building. The industry fears these kaimahi will be lost to the sector permanently. The construction and infrastructure labour demands of cyclone recovery activities are not yet fully clear, but the group is working with Waihanga Ara Rau (Construction and Infrastructure Workforce Development Council) and expects to have more clarity on the workforce demand pipeline in the near future. Local infrastructure employers anticipate the biggest demand will be for Class 4 truck drivers and digger operators and have stressed the need to scale-up training opportunities at pace. Kōrero with Te Pūkenga has been centred around the need for innovative and flexible models, and MSD is working with existing providers on training initiatives. The group acknowledged the critical role progressive procurement will play and will link in with the mahi that the Regional Economic Development Agency is currently undertaking around this.

Silver Fern Farms has taken time to reflect on the impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle. In the immediate aftermath, Silver Fern's Pacific site in Whakatu, Hastings was closed for four weeks because of the flooding and power loss. As a result, significant volumes of finished product had to be moved to third party storage. Pacific is the only Silver Fern Farms site in the North Island certified to supply China chilled products which meant supply of these premium product lines was compromised during their closure. Transportation times and costs were severely impacted and remain an issue for stock travelling from South Tairāwhiti, Wairoa, Rissington and Patoka. They believe it will take up to five years for severely affected farms in the region to return to pre-cyclone productivity levels and are worried about the number of farmers who may decide to walk away from farming for good. The labour landscape remains extremely challenging with domestic recruitment more difficult than ever before. International workers have been engaged to help fill semi-skilled positions and some entry level roles, but shortages remain, and because of current visa settings and conditions, recruitment for the 23/24 season looks increasingly difficult. They are hopeful the investment in a national marketing campaign will attract more kaimahi to their organisation. The Hawke's Bay RSLG has a strong interest in these developments with its focus on the primary sector in their Regional Workforce Plan (RWP).

## REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN – REFRESH 2023



The RSLG's refreshed RWP will be published in early July. Supporting the new RWP will be two supplementary documents – 'Data Insights' and an 'Actions Update'. The group remain committed to the actions outlined in the 2022 RWP, alongside the five priority areas – primary sector, construction, wāhine in the workforce, school (kura) transitions, and work ready job seekers.

The three new areas of focus are:

- Cyclone Recovery
- Drivers licencing in Schools
- Healthcare – nursing, kaiāwhina and Allied Health

## FOCUS ON WAIROA

Wairoa suffered severe damage due to Cyclone Gabrielle. North Clyde bore the brunt of the flood waters with whānau and businesses in this area left with damage to their properties and equipment, and ongoing issues with silt. State Highway 2, the main arterial route between Wairoa and Napier, was closed for three months after the cyclone.

Over the past three months a member of the Kānoa-RSLG team has spent two days a week in Wairoa providing support as the district recovers from the impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle. As MBIE representatives, it has been professionally rewarding to offer agency support and engage with key actors. It has been a privilege to hear the stories and appreciate the impressive character of a resilient community. A community who with humility, resolutely declares 'Wairoa for Wairoa'.

A Wairoa Recovery Office (WRO) has been established and was originally based out of the Wairoa Young Achievers Trust (WYAT) offices but has recently shifted to Wairoa Airport. Working together with the Wairoa District Council, Tātau Tātau o Te Wairoa (TToTW), Te Kahui Ōhanga o Takitimu, MBIE, MPI, MSD and community providers, they are focussed on a rebuild that puts the community first. Mahi underway to support the recovery includes:

- WRO community and stakeholder engagement informed the development of an action plan centred around four pou, Environment, social, economic and infrastructure.
- WYAT, through their recovery officer funded by MSD, are providing ongoing promotion and assistance to the community for at least the next 12-months to ensure equitable access to cyclone recovery funds.
- A 'Thrive, Kai and Korero' Event was held giving 200 whānau the opportunity to meet with agencies, iwi, and community providers. This consultation, along with other engagements, determined whānau priorities:
  - Taking charge of their own affairs
  - Working with services at their pace
  - Having a full and comprehensive view of support mechanisms so they can make the right decisions.
- Revitalisation of the Wairoa Business Association, supported by Kānoa-RSLG. Objectives of this mahi are:
  - Tracking the recovery as a collective network
  - Articulating the needs of the business community so aid packages are put to best use
  - Identifying stimuli that will help reignite the local economy
  - Providing a forum where Wairoa businesses can voice what is needed to create a sustainable recovery.
- A Wairoa Locality Plan for healthcare has been created and Kānoa-RSLG provided feedback on workforce development, specifically:
  - Supporting a mobile health workforce
  - Advocating for local training provision
- TToTW are assisting the Kahui-led project to progress two opportunities to grow and train a local workforce. Kānoa-RSLG staff are supporting their mahi to develop a site for temporary accommodation for trades and horticulture kaimahi, and the building of a tertiary training facility and prefabricated housing factory.
- Kānoa-RSLG staff recently visited Wairoa College to meet with some Year 12 and 13 rangatahi to discuss their future career aspirations, and training and work goals once they leave school.

## OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS

- Stakeholder engagements with industry, employers, kaimahi, councils and government agencies to determine cyclone related workforce impacts and mitigations.
- Ongoing mahi on actions and recommendations as outlined in [Hawke's Bay Regional Workforce Plan](#)
- Regional Workforce Plan 2023 Refresh publication and socialisation