

REGIONAL INSIGHTS



Credit: Richard Briggs Photography

The recent Future of Work conference strengthened connections between schools and industry in the region. The conference was held on 14 June, and it showcased over 40 industries with more than 80 businesses sharing opportunities and career pathways at interactive workstations. Students heard from a range of inspiring speakers, participated in workshops, and interacted with a range of career and training opportunities. In the evening students and their whānau were able to share the full experience and hear short presentations from all of New Zealand's universities. The event was a collaboration between Marlborough Secondary Schools, the Graeme Dingle Foundation, and the Marlborough District Council and merged the Colleges' annual Careers Expo with the annual Future of Work Conference. Supporting schools and industry to work together on opportunities to inform our young people about career opportunities in Marlborough and facilitate the pathway from school to employment is one of the actions in *Te Mahere Ohumahi ā-Rohe o Te Taihuhu o Te Waka-a-Māui | Marlborough Regional Workforce Plan* (Action 4). The RSLG encourages industries and businesses to participate in the Future of Work Conference and other activities to strengthen connections between schools and industry; communicate career and learning pathways (Action 2); and improve perceptions of their industry and career opportunities (Action 3). A good example is Aquaculture (see below).

The Aquaculture sector is working with local schools to develop the future regional workforce. The Marine Farming Association is working with students from the Queen Charlotte College Aquaculture Academy, Marlborough Boys' College, Marlborough Girls' College and Kaikoura High School. They work with the schools to tailor the experience to fit students' interests, and a number of students have registered for the Gateway programme in aquaculture. Four trips have been run so far in 2023 thanks to Aroma Aquaculture, Clearwater Mussels, Sanford, and Marine Farm Management involvement with the Gateway programme. (Source *Marine Farming Association April Newsletter*).

A new Technology and Innovation hub will support collaboration in the region. Deputy Prime Minister Carmel Sepuloni announced a \$580,000 grant from the Regional Strategic Partnership fund for Marlborough District Council's new technology and innovation hub. "The hub will bring start-ups and entrepreneurs into the centre of town, as well as connect Marlborough's world-class research capability to commercialisation," Economic Development Portfolio Manager Mark Unwin said. The tech and innovation hub will help new and existing companies to solve regional challenges by supporting collaboration. Technology and innovation, particularly agritech, aquatech, and innovation in wine manufacturing are growing sectors in Marlborough's economy as highlighted in the [Marlborough Regional Workforce Outlook 2023](#) and [Regional Workforce Plan](#). For Marlborough to be a recognised leader in agritech solutions in Australasia – specifically in wine, viticulture, aquaculture and the blue economy – is one of the three goals in the Marlborough District Council's [Marlborough Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032](#). However, Marlborough has one of the lowest number of start-ups in the country. Various groups are working to address this with the Marlborough Chamber of Commerce holding 'Marlborough Tech Meet Up', a regular networking event for technology professionals; The Marlborough Business Trust is organising 'Startup Weekend Marlborough'; and Techweek this year featured multiple events for different audiences as mentioned in the [May 2023 local insights report](#).

REGIONAL WORKFORCE OUTLOOK



The RSLG published the Marlborough Regional Workforce Outlook 2023 (RWO 2023) on 15 May. The report is intended to provide the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Workforce Development Councils (WDCs), tertiary education organisations (TEOs), our other partners, and the Marlborough community with an overview of workforce and skills needs in the region. The *RWO 2023* covers the focus sectors identified in *Te Mahere Ohumahi ā-Rohe o Te Taihuhu o Te Waka-a-Māui | Marlborough Regional Workforce Plan* (RWP). It also includes emerging sectors where growth is anticipated and a workforce and skills response is required. It identifies workforce and skills supply and demand gaps and local insights on careers information. [[Link to the report PDF 697 KB, 18 pages](#)]

The catalyst for this mahi was the TEC's request for advice to inform the content of Supplementary Plan Guidance in June 2023, and 2024 investment in tertiary education delivery. The RSLG hopes the document will be read more broadly, particularly by WDCs and TEOs. There are nine themes in the RSLG's overarching advice:

1. Fund Mā Māori Mō Māori, ki a Māori (for Māori, by Māori, with Māori) solutions
2. Create an evidence base to inform decision making and monitor change
3. Maintain and broaden existing provision
4. Improve TEO marketing, school, and industry engagement
5. Expand the focus beyond school leavers
6. Support sufficient and suitable programmes for managers, team leaders and supervisors
7. Support for employers and learners engaged in work based learning
8. Develop a multi-trade facility at the Te Pūkenga campus in Budge Street, Blenheim
9. Invest in programmes where there are low learner numbers but there is a strategic, equity or regional need.

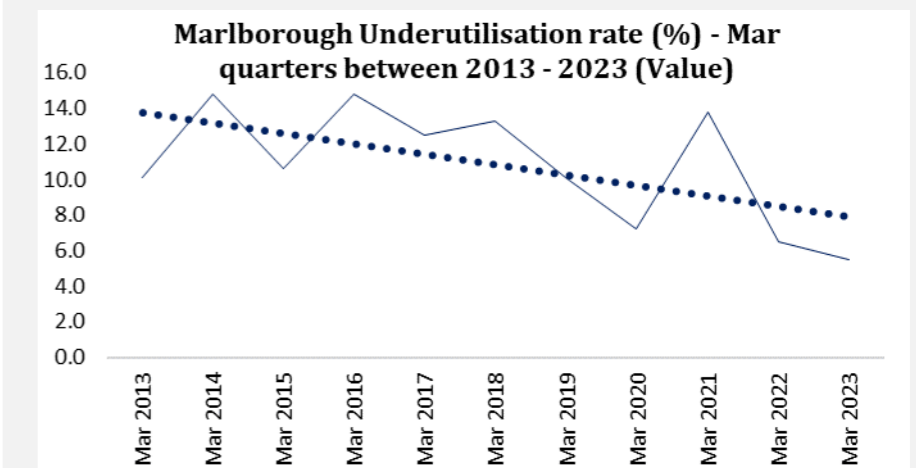
Local Insights Report: June 2023

TRENDS AT A GLANCE

5.5% Underutilisation rate*: the lowest underutilisation rate in the country for the March 2023 quarter.

Underutilisation includes those who are working part-time and would like to work more (underemployed), the unemployed, and people who would like to engage in the labour market. Māori are overrepresented in our underutilisation statistics.

The chart below shows the 10-year trend for the Underutilisation Rate. Underutilisation remained stubbornly high for the first five years of the last decade and then dropped sharply with the effects of COVID and a tight labour market. Anecdotally, in recent years employers have been more flexible with working hours (e.g. school hours) and more open to part-time work and employing people with transferable skills and training them.



We have historically had a low rate of unemployment (currently estimated at 0.3%*) and we have a tight labour market (see [February 2023 local insights report](#) 10-year trend for unemployment rate). Despite this, in the recent past we had low participation in the labour force and a high rate of underutilisation. This is in part due to our older population, but specific groups within our community have lower participation in the labour market, including young people, Māori, disabled people and women.

The RSLG's long term strategy in *Te Mahere Ohumahi ā-Rohe o Te Taihuhu o Te Waka-a-Māui | Marlborough Regional Workforce Plan* addresses underutilisation through the following actions:

- Action 5 Everyone in the region is aware of career and training opportunities.
- Action 6 Enabling equitable outcomes for Māori through education and work.

Source: Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey, March 2023
***Caveat:** Household Labour Force Survey results can fluctuate (sampling errors) particularly for regions such as Marlborough that have a small population size. Individual stats should be considered with caution, and consideration of long-term trends is recommended as being more reliable.

OUR FOCUS TO 30 JUNE 2023:

The focus for the Marlborough RSLG is implementing *Te Mahere Ahumahi ā-Rohe o Te Taihuhu 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](#).

Prepared by the regionally led Marlborough Regional Skills Leadership Group. For further information contact: MarlboroughRSLG@mbie.govt.nz or visit www.mbie.govt.nz/marlborough-rslg