



WAIKATO



About Regional Skills Leadership Groups

The Government established independent Regional Skills Leadership Groups (RSLGs) to identify and support better ways of meeting the future skills and workforce needs of Aotearoa New Zealand's regions and cities. RSLGs are connecting with stakeholders, gathering labour market information, and providing advice to decision-makers in regions and central government. Functioning independently, the groups are locally based and regionally enabled, and supported by a team of data analysts, advisors and workforce specialists at the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. Members of RSLGs include iwi/Māori, regional industry leaders, economic development agencies, community and government representatives, who contribute their knowledge and local expertise.

www.mbie.govt.nz/waikato-rslg

©Crown Copyright

The material contained in this report is subject to Crown copyright protection unless otherwise indicated. The Crown copyright protected material may be reproduced free of charge in any format or media without requiring specific permission. This is subject to the material being reproduced accurately and not being used in a derogatory manner or in a misleading context. Where the material is being published or issued to others, the source and copyright status should be acknowledged. The permission to reproduce Crown copyright protected material does not extend to any material in this report that is identified as being the copyright of a third party. Authorisation to reproduce such material should be obtained from the copyright holders.



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Disclaimer

Published with support from the New Zealand Government. This document should not be used as a substitute for legislation or legal advice. Information, examples and answers to your questions about the topics covered here can be found on the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) website: www.mbie.govt.nz or by calling MBIE free on: 0800 20 90 20.

July 2023

ISBN:

Waikato Regional Workforce Plan
Print 978-1-991092-16-8
Online 978-1-991092-17-5



Waikato Regional Skills
Leadership Group
www.mbie.govt.nz/waikato-rslg

CONTENTS

Matariki – a time for refresh and renewal	04
Our vision for the next 12 months	05
Closing comments	05

Regional progress	06
Success and barriers	06
Priorities for the next 12 months	07

Healthy Communities Spotlight	09
Recommendations	11
Actions	11

Labour market insights	12
Areas identified in RWP	12
Initiatives from community	12
Other advice to TEC	12

From Farm to Port	14
Progress on 2022 - 2023 Actions	16
Priorities for the next 12 months	20

Waikato Regional Skills Leadership Group	22
---	-----------



MATARIKI – A TIME FOR REFRESH AND RENEWAL

TUIA TE RANGI E TŪ IHO NEI

TUIA TE PAPA E TAKOTO NEI

TUIA TE MAURI O MATARIKI TE MĀTAHI O TE TAU

TUIA TE TINI KUA KOHIKOHIA E TE KUPENGA O TARAMAINUKU

TUIA TE MUKA TĀNGATA

KA RONGO TE PŌ

KA RONGO TE AO

TIHEI MAURI ORA!

The Waikato Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) is pleased to provide an update on its Regional Workforce Plan¹ (RWP), launched in July 2022. This update includes a progress report on the plan's actions and outcomes to date, as well as new areas of focus and investment recommendations to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

In releasing our Regional Workforce Plan refresh, it is timely that we do this leading up to Matariki where we look back on where we've come from with a renewed vision on where and how we are travelling to the world ahead.

As we look back, Covid is squarely in the rear-view mirror and while we are in the space of 'living with Covid' what is more apparent to us all are the work force challenges and how we prepare ourselves for current and future skills needs.

The recent storms and the impacts in the Waikato Region are stark reminders that the timescale of what were one in one-hundred-year extreme weather events, appear to be the new norm. We acknowledge the impact this has had on our roads and the challenges faced within the Thames-Coromandel District. With investment going into infrastructure to rebuild roads and water plants (water supply and wastewater treatment), having a skilled and capable infrastructure workforce will be critical.

The energy landscape in the Waikato region is undergoing a transformation, with investment in renewable energy sources such as solar arrays and wood pellet plants to replace coal as an energy source. Additionally, the region is transitioning to electric vehicles and exploring the potential of hydrogen fuel as a viable alternative.

The West Coast from Taranaki to the Waikato is currently being evaluated for the potential of offshore wind energy. We have observed the recent visits of both corporate and Iwi representatives exploring these sites between Aotearoa New Zealand and Europe.

Statistics New Zealand's regional greenhouse gas emissions estimates, activities within the Waikato region generated approximately 16.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2021, compared to 15.2 in 2007. Despite fluctuations during this period, the Waikato region needs to navigate its way towards reducing its carbon footprint to meet 2030 and 2050 carbon reduction goals. The regional workforce is on this journey and the RSLG is pleased to support industry partners to assess the needs.

We further acknowledge the significant growth in digital skills and technology and note that the Hi-Tech sector at ~\$15 billion per year is the second largest exporter for Aotearoa New Zealand, where salaries are typically twice that of the national average. Te Waka Anga Whakamua Waikato (Regional Economic Development Agency) is active in bringing together tech companies and assisting them to show case opportunities.

The Waikato Region relies on seasonal workers to fulfil workforce needs for the health, hospitality and primary sector. We are also deepening our relationships with Immigration New Zealand to help identify barriers, bringing specific examples to the front where assistance can be provided.

As we look forward in the refresh of the RWP¹ we are pleased to bring focus to some key areas that will make a difference:

• Rangatahi

The challenge of the 'leaky pipe' is one that is shared by many regions across the country, where young people struggle to see themselves in future careers. To ensure that our education system is successful, it is essential that the tertiary sector provides support to help young people move into fulfilling and worthwhile employment. Smart Waikato's programme to connect rangatahi with industry is a good example of this, and it is heartening to see other regions taking up the initiative. We further recognise that pastoral care, plays a crucial role and we are working with the MoE, TEC and MSD on how we may do this in an impactful way.

• Futures Academy

We are working in partnership with the Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence to evaluate the training requirements of farmers and their staff. Our initial area of focus is dairy farming, and we have discussed the potential for establishing a Futures Academy. An academy would bring together existing programmes and may even suggest the introduction of new ones, to meet the needs of farmers and their staff.

1. Waikato Regional Workforce Plan 2022

- **Apprentice Re-Boot**

In the Construction and Infrastructure space we have heard from sector members of the requirement to re-visit a past apprenticeship programme (previously coordinated by Wintec) with industry, MSD and Waihanga Ara Rau and Hanga Aro Rau Workforce Development Councils.

- **Iwi**

Waikato Tainui's Waharoa programme stands out as a scheme that we are keen to support and help flourish.

- **Freight & Logistics**

Te Waka has done much to support the sector around drivers licencing and we acknowledge that further work is ongoing in this space to give it the depth and breadth of cover that the sector needs.

- **Sector groups**

We are committed to bringing together stakeholders from across the Waikato Region to collaborate and share their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing the region. In the coming year, we will be inviting interested parties to join sector forums to ensure their voices are heard.

- **Digital Technology**

We recognise the potential of combining learning and gaming to create engaging experiences that appeal to people of all ages. We are committed to highlighting the opportunities this presents for education providers to explore and benefit from.

- **Health**

Health is the largest employer in the region, and we are pleased to welcome some new talent to focus on the sector. Given the sector is large we will pick some key areas to delve into and support.

- **Hospitality**

Hospitality will get a focus too and we look forward to what will come with new talent joining the Waikato RSLG.

OUR VISION FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

The RSLG is committed to achieving the aspirations and actions outlined in the RWP. The RWP's four pou – Ōritetanga (Equity), He Tangata (People), Whakangungu

ahumahi (Industry Training), and Te anga whakamua (The future) – emphasise the importance of equity and resilience in achieving desired outcomes. The progress on 2022 - 2023 actions of the report include details on the progress made in these areas to date.

Details of these pou, looking backward and forward, are provided in the Regional Progress section. Prioritisation sets the agenda in terms of what truly matters, and this is reflected in how resources are allocated. Stakeholder engagement was instrumental in helping the RSLG to identify and prioritise the necessary actions outlined in the RWP, while still being able to meet the desired outcomes of the workforce plan.

In response to strategic workforce needs, emerging trends or opportunities impacting the workforce, and perennial mismatches in labour supply and demand, the TEC has requested investment cases from each of the RSLGs. The RSLG has also been guided by funding advice provided by WDCs, as outlined in the Labour Market Insights section.

The Healthy Communities section introduces a new area of interest, exploring opportunities to enhance skill levels and increase the representation of Māori and Pasifika in the sector. This includes clarifying and strengthening pathways, along with recommendations and potential actions aimed at achieving these and other goals.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Lastly, we acknowledge that Te Pukenga, is going through the final stages of its change process. In the third quarter of this year, we look forward to the Waikato RSLG, Workforce Development Councils and Te Pukenga working together to bring a complete perspective of region needs and delivery together for the benefit of our community.

We look forward to receiving your feedback on the refreshed RWP for the Waikato RSLG.

Mauri ora!



Brendon Green
Co-Chair



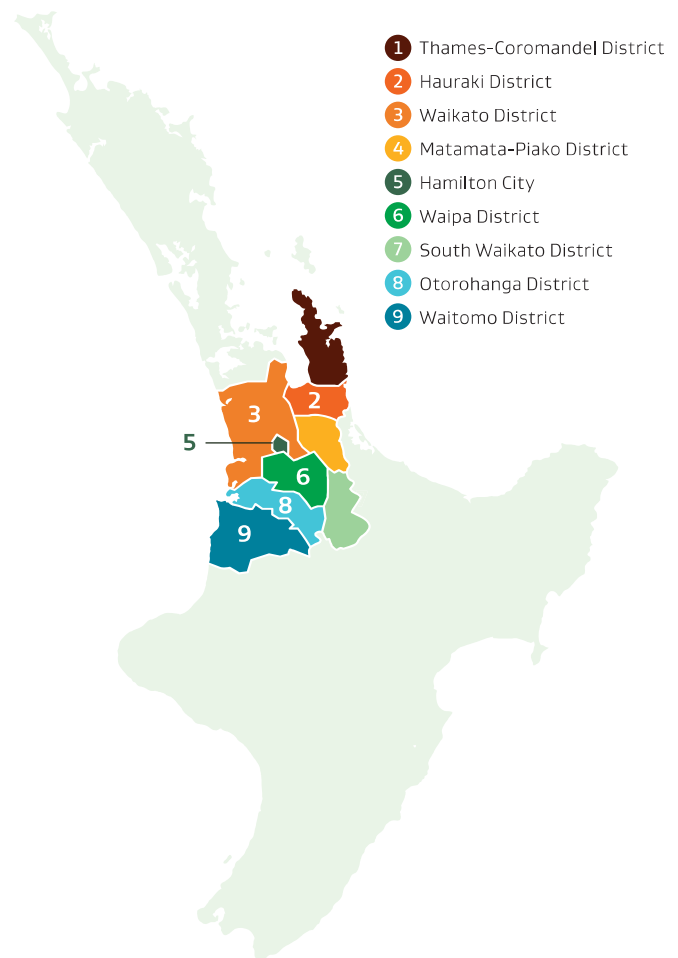
Keith Ikin
Co-Chair

REGIONAL PROGRESS

The Waikato region is renowned for its diverse economy, encompassing agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, healthcare and education.

In the March 2023 quarter, the unemployment rate in the Waikato region was 5.1 percent, lower than the national average of 5.2 percent. This marks a continuation of the trend since 2021, where the Waikato region has consistently had a lower unemployment rate than the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand.

This indicates a relatively strong and improving labour market in the region. Additionally, there was a net increase of 2,800 jobs, with notable gains in the construction and manufacturing industries. This positive trend suggests that employers are expanding their workforce and job opportunities are available for individuals seeking employment.



SUCCESS AND BARRIERS

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

The demand for tech skills in the Waikato region is expected to continue growing, particularly with the automation of the primary sector through robotics and artificial intelligence, as well as the emergence of innovative tech start-ups. While the region has a sufficient number of graduates in the tech sector, there is a shortage of skilled workers with more advanced expertise. Furthermore, the school-to-employment pipeline could be strengthened, and the tech-related qualifications offered by tertiary institutions across the region may not provide enough practical application learning to meet industry expectations.

Highlights from the past year included:

- Local tech companies and initiatives investing in our rangatahi (young people) to provide them with experiences that help build the local pipeline of future skilled labour.
- The Māori Trades and Training Fund is considering supporting Māori entities in facilitating in-work training in digital technology to assist candidates in moving towards tech-related employment.
- Hanga Aro Rau (Manufacturing, Engineering and Logistics Workforce Development Council) has created micro-credentials aimed at up-skilling team leaders in manufacturing to support the increasing digitisation processes, thus smoothing the pathway for digital skills.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES CASE STUDY

The Ministry of Social Development and HCLTech have joined forces to cultivate Aotearoa New Zealand’s homegrown technology talent and make digital skills more accessible. The rise at HCLTech pilot programme was launched in August 2022 with 18 participants receiving foundational training. This Hamilton-based initiative has given people in the Waikato region the chance to begin or further their career in tech. It is specifically tailored to support Māori, Pasifika and women who wish to gain, upgrade or switch their skills. Participants completed the foundational training in November 2022 and were offered internships that started in March 2023. At least 14 interns will be job-ready and eligible for employment with HCLTech or other employers from October. This Hamilton pilot is the first time the model has been tested in Aotearoa New Zealand.



CONSTRUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

There is significant opportunity to increase capacity and capability in order to meet the growing investments in the construction and infrastructure sector across the Waikato region. Ongoing skills shortages are observed in areas such as carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, welding, as well as a need for project managers experienced in overseeing large-scale infrastructure projects and construction managers who can supervise the entire construction process from planning to completion. Targeted efforts to attract, transition, upskill, and retain workers in the sector are critical for the industry.

Highlights from the past year for the RSLG include the successful attraction of women to the industry through initiatives like Women in Hi Vis and the online toolkit and equity directory. Additionally, significant progress has been made in building connections between Māori businesses and procurement pipelines, providing further opportunities for Māori workforce development. The development of micro-credentials by Waihanga Ara Rau (Construction and Infrastructure Workforce Development Council) including on site assembly and steel fixing, has also contributed to upskilling the workforce.

CONSTRUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE (HOUSING) CASE STUDY



In response to the region's housing needs, efforts have been made to implement innovative techniques to address capacity and capability gaps in the sector. For instance, EC8 Digital Building Solutions, a startup, has developed automation technology to measure and cut plasterboard, making it available to builders for increased efficiency, accuracy, and waste reduction.

These procedural efficiencies, facilitated through digital means, present opportunities for upskilling workers. Here, the RSLG's role is to advocate between industry and workforce development councils (e.g. Waihanga Ara Rau) to ensure that the required skills are identified and potentially recognised at a national level through NZQA. These skills can then be rolled out and acknowledged regionally as desired.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Over the next twelve months, our focus will be on addressing skill shortages, creating opportunities for disadvantaged learners, and strengthening pathways between school and work/training.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

There is a shortage of digital technology teachers in primary education, resulting in a limited number of streams taught at that level. This has a cascading effect, as fewer students take tech subjects in high school and higher education, leading to a reduced supply of tech skills entering the industry. Moreover, there is a gap in the delivery of entry-level IT qualifications (Level 3+) in the region, with very few in-person training options available for IT students at that level. Other regions offer in-person short course training options through providers like Yoobee and Aspire 2.

Industry feedback indicates that certain higher learning fields of study, while teaching technical aspects of the qualification, may not provide enough practical industry-oriented learning to enable new hires to quickly adapt to the job. Additionally, the cost and duration of these qualifications can be prohibitive, causing individuals to drop out of higher learning courses in favour of immediate financial security through low-skilled jobs.

Women, Māori and Pasifika individuals are under-represented in the tech sector in the Waikato region, often employed in lower-skilled occupations. Workforce diversity is a significant challenge in the sector, and while initiatives like TOMRA Fresh Food Scholarships for Women in STEM are steps in the right direction, more work needs to be done.

FREIGHT AND LOGISTICS

Initially, our focus in this area was on supporting the Road to Success programme to build a pipeline of truck drivers in the region, as guided by the Waikato and Bay of Plenty Freight Action Plan. However, our efforts have since expanded through close engagement with industry, in partnership with Te Waka and Hanga Aro Rau, to gain a deeper understanding of talent attraction, retention, and upskilling opportunities and barriers in the freight and logistics sector².

2. Waikato & Bay of Plenty Freight Action Plan 2022

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Waikato region has one of the largest carbon footprints compared to other regions, due to coal burning, livestock emissions and heavy freight.

The opportunities in response to the impacts of climate change i.e., storms and outages, more volatile weather, rising tides and coastal erosion include solar generation, development of hydrogen refuelling stations, replacing coal burning with wood pellet boilers, offshore wind power generation and afforestation.

By way of example, Ohinewai Sleepyhead are implementing sustainability principles into their work practices and upskilling of staff that will enhance productivity with the least amount of impact on the environment.

WAIKATO WORKFORCE

We need to evaluate the way we educate our rangatahi. It is essential to explore new approaches to engage disenfranchised rangatahi, presenting them with learning opportunities that resonate within the school curriculum. A significant issue is the high number of rangatahi, particularly Māori, who disengage from education due to absenteeism. This problem has been exacerbated by the pandemic, severe weather events, and the cost-of-living crisis. The Government recently announced a \$74m truancy package, creating 82 attendance officer roles.

While this initiative may encourage rangatahi to return to the classroom, it does not address the underlying issues, such as behaviour challenges that hinder the willingness to learn and hinder meaningful employment prospects or other training opportunities in the longer term.

WAITOMO DISTRICT RANGATAHI PATHWAYS CASE STUDY



When the Te Kuiti community wanted to help their youth dream big and explore career paths beyond what they were used to, Waitomo District Council listened and provided funding to Ao Tahī, a local business to create and implement a programme to do just that. Since the beginning of the 2023 school year, all 17 schools in the district including several local businesses have been actively involved in developing and facilitating pathways to employment through education.

The mission of the initiative is that upon leaving secondary school:

- All rangatahi in the Waitomo District region will pursue study or work.
- They will feel confident and prepared for this step in their career pathway.
- They have been exposed to a wide range of career options and feel they have made informed decisions.
- They will feel supported throughout their journey.
- They will engage effectively in the next step of their pathway.

To achieve these goals, pathway plans, employer/employee exposure events, and workshops will be implemented.

The project encompasses:

- All 17 schools in the Waitomo District.
- Students from Year 5 (approx. age 9) to Year 13.
 - Years 5 and 6: Workshops and employer/tertiary exposure visits only.
 - Years 7 to 13: Career pathway plans, workshops, and employer / tertiary exposure visits
- There are **687** students from Year 7 to Year 13 in schools within the region, which means developing and maintaining 687 career plans.

Key activities to date:

- Two main activities in term 1:
 - Starting career pathway plans. A total of 212 plans were initiated.
 - Workshops on the topic of ‘Exploring Career Aspirations’ with younger students. A total of 14 workshops were conducted.
- One employer exposure event has taken place, specifically to Scion (Crown Research Institute) in Rotorua.

The initiative is initially planned for a period of 2 years, but stakeholders have expressed a desire to extend it out to 5 years.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES SPOTLIGHT

In the Waikato region, 41 percent of the population lives in rural areas. However, the rural health workforce is aging, with many nearing retirement.

There is a stark need for healthcare services, but the current medical training system contributes to inequity. Few qualified individuals choose to work in rural areas, and the Auckland School of Medicine only offers limited placement options, with no placements from the Otago School of Medicine in the South Island.

The lack of accessible health services contributes to disparities in life expectancy and illness experiences between rural Māori, rural populations, and non-rural populations.³

Key statistics include:

- Māori males have a life expectancy that is 8 years shorter than Pākehā males, while Māori females have a life expectancy that is 7 years shorter.
- Pacific females and males have a life expectancy that is 6 years shorter than Pākehā⁴

The demand for health services is expected to remain high in rural Waikato, particularly in the most deprived areas such as Ngatea, Kerepehi, South Paeroa (Hauraki DC), and Tokoroa (South Waikato DC). However, the population size is not projected to increase significantly.

While delivering rural services remains a challenge, it's worth noting that urban Hamilton, despite being one of the more deprived areas, will continue to drive greater demand for health care services. Additionally, the demand for healthcare services in Hamilton is expected to increase by 30.3 percent or 53,600 people by 2048. The city's diversity will also grow, with a decrease in the Pākehā population and an increase in Māori, Pacific, and Asian populations.

Ngāruawāhia and Huntly, which also experience higher levels of deprivation, are projected to undergo significant population growth by 2048. The Waikato District, including Huntly and Ngāruawāhia, will see an increase of 31,600 people or 36.7 percent, which is equivalent to adding another Thames-Coromandel district. Overall, there is a pressing need for enhanced healthcare services in both rural and urban areas of the Waikato region to address disparities and meet the growing demand for care.

Currently, the Waikato region heavily relies on a migrant workforce, particularly in the healthcare sector. For instance, international qualified nurses (IQN), make up 11.7 percent of the workforce, ranking the region third in Aotearoa New Zealand after Auckland and Canterbury.

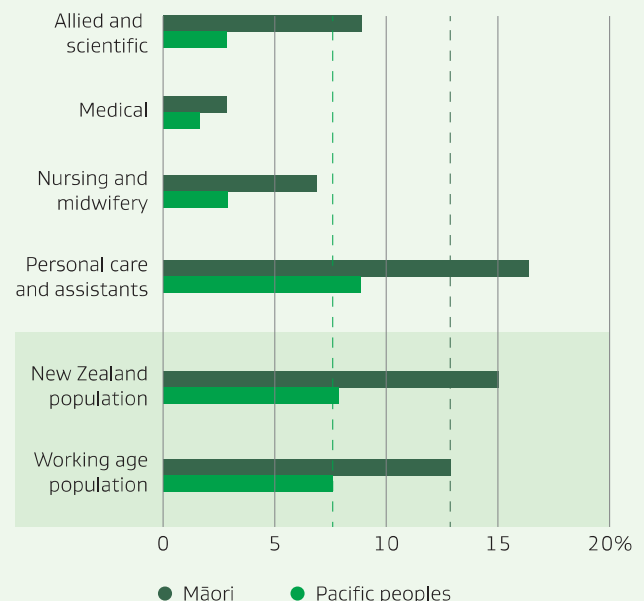
Within the wider healthcare workforce, the residential care services sector (mainly aged residential care) has the highest proportion (25.58 percent) of workers on a migrant visa, slightly higher than the national average of 23.5 percent. Most of these workers are recent residents who entered under the skilled migrant category (33.1 percent).

Hospitals in the Waikato have 13.8 percent of their workforce on a migrant visa, again slightly higher than the national average of 11.6 percent. Of these, 56 percent are recent residents under the skilled migrant category. Medical and other care services have only 7.1 percent of their workforce on a migrant visa, and like the previous categories, most are recent residents who entered under the skilled migrant category.

The Aotearoa New Zealand trained medical workforce in the Waikato lacks diversity. Only 8.4 percent of Aotearoa New Zealand qualified nurses who identify as Māori work in the region, while Māori make up 23.9 percent of the population. Similarly, only 6.7 percent of Aotearoa New Zealand qualified nurses who identify as Pacific work in the Waikato, despite Pacific people comprising 4.5 percent of the population.

The Health and Disability System Review Final Report in 2020⁵ emphasised the importance of having a diverse and representative healthcare workforce to deliver equitable health services. However, Māori are under-represented in medical, nursing, midwifery, allied health, and scientific roles that offer higher pay. The lack of diversity is visually depicted below.

FIGURE 1.
New Zealand Māori and Pacific peoples workforce populations



3. Sapere, 'Rural Interprofessional health Schools' March 2020

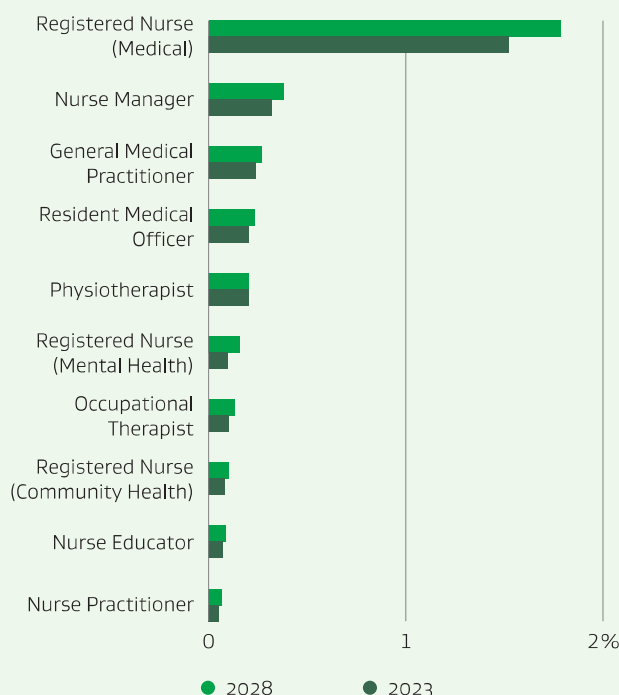
4. Te Whatu Ora Waikato

5. New Zealand Health and Disability System Review | Final Report March 2020



In addition to the lack of diversity, the Waikato region is not training healthcare professionals at the required levels to meet future demand. Based on the average completion rate over the past three years and the projected job openings in the sector until 2028, there will be an insufficient number of trained individuals at levels 1 to 3 (Kaiāwhina/Health Care Assistant roles) to fill the job openings. Moreover, there will also be an insufficient number of individuals trained at degree level 7 and above to fill expected job vacancies. These roles include Registered Nurses, Medical Practitioners, and allied health professionals such as Sonographers, Pharmacists and Physiotherapists. The top 10 occupations across the health sector in the region are shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2.
Top 10 occupations by job openings (% total)



THE WAIKATO REGION REQUIRES:

2,000 nurses to fill job openings over the next 5 years

463 medical practitioners with 168 GPs (35 percent of the total forecast and this is where the greatest need is)

7,273 Kaiāwhina/HCAs to fill job openings in the next 5 years

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Train and/or recruit more rurally based health professionals to meet demand
- Leverage Māori and Pacific to train in professional clinical roles like nursing, medical and allied health
- Upskill the many Māori/Pacific in Kaiāwhina and health care assistant roles, into professional medical roles
- Encourage and mentor secondary students into health professions with a focus on Māori and Pacific students
- Consider the role of migrant workforce and ensure that they are welcomed and utilised to their skills levels and encourage them to upskill
- Provide input into the development of the Rural Health Strategy being developed by the Ministry of Health
- Consider the recommendations made in The Rural Health Strategy due to be published in July 2023

ACTIONS

- Advocate to remove barriers and fast-tracking in the health sector with a focus on local and migrant training:
 - Promote Māori and Pacific students to take health, science and maths-based subjects at secondary school
 - Support/advocate for initiatives that attract/retain Māori and Pacific students into careers and relevant internships within health
 - Support Māori into mentoring and leadership training
- Promote for employer skill needs to be met in the health sector, especially in Kaiāwhina roles:
 - Identify learn-as-you-earn training and development opportunities to upskill kaiāwhina noting the needs to be flexible, low-cost and close to home



LABOUR MARKET INSIGHTS

When the Regional Workforce plan was launched in July 2022, it presented a workforce ecosystem represented by a road winding from “Farm to the Port”, using the Waikato-Tainui concept of “he piko, he taniwha”; set against a backdrop of Te Ao Māori, Healthy Communities, The Future of Work, and Climate Adaptation.

Our limited resources and short timeframe forced the RSLG to narrow the scope for this first Plan and prioritise its actions.

This has all culminated in the investment case advice put forward to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in April 2023 to potentially base its decisions in relation to tertiary education and training that could be funded to lift labour market performance. In preparing this advice, the Waikato RSLG engaged with several employers, peak bodies, unions, tertiary institutes, private training establishments, government agencies, local government, and communities from across the region. A copy of the Waikato TEC advice 2023 can be found on the RSLG website.

AREAS IDENTIFIED IN RWP

• Digital Capability

Navigating career pathways within the sector is often unclear. The Waikato ICT sector leaders continue to advocate for the creation of an apprenticeship programme for further development of targeted micro-credentials.

• Primary Industry

Primary industry leaders especially in Dairy identified a lack of support for upskilling and career progression as a major gap in the training programmes delivered across the region. Broad advice was around support of non-formal training/courses for practical skills to support on-farm duties.

• Manufacturing

The sector is facing a shortage of skilled workers due to the aging workforce, low levels of training, and limited access to training opportunities. Broad advice given included support for employers with aging workers to help train new workers in the industry, digital skills training and provision and development of CNC skills throughout the region’s engineering/manufacturing sectors.

• Construction & Infrastructure

The industry continues to grow despite the strain on businesses who find it difficult to retain skilled/unskilled labour. Recommendations to TEC included investing in iwi enabling them to become pathway providers, and more training targeting women to attract and retain them in the sector.

• Freight & Logistics

The shortage of truck drivers grows with each retiring driver; employers advise of the difficulty in attracting, training/retaining staff. Our advice ranged from supporting in-person on-the-job adult education training programmes for older/retiring road transport operators to train, assess and certify younger staff to breaking down the entry-level 3 NZQA Road transport qualification from 28 weeks to micro-credentials on forklift OSH operator training + F endorsement, health and safety. These micro-credentials are exclusively offered by MITO through Shift Up Gateway programmes which is only available to rangatahi. Similar micro-credentials are needed for adults, including those transitioning from other industries such as forestry.

INITIATIVES FROM COMMUNITY

• Equine

The RSLG was approached by the Equine Industry with a note that the Waikato region faces a shortage of qualified instructors to teach horsemanship, riding skills, horse health, and nutrition, especially for young riders. We have included in our advice to the TEC targeted recommendations on how the industry could be enhanced via apprenticeships and certain labour market gaps (requiring further support for another 40 to 50 EFTs under the Youth Guarantee Funded EFT, supporting youth).

OTHER ADVICE TO TEC

• Youth

There is a need to address broader pipeline issues that go down to a secondary school level and support better collaboration between employers and schools to improve the provision of careers advice by embedding it into everyday learning and investing in careers advisor capability in the region.

• Literacy & Numeracy

Despite the region’s economic growth and development, there remains a need for employers to increase their access to foundation numeracy and literacy initiatives for their workers.

There also needs to be support for employers in the key role they play in promoting accessibility to foundation numeracy/literacy initiatives.

- **Industry Feedback**

Industry feedback reflects that (for the most part) it is not suffering from a lack of qualifications but rather there are issues in how qualifications are being delivered. Our suggested remedy includes the need for more practical training delivery rather than theoretical learning and for pastoral care to support entry level staff. Finally, industries are looking at ways to share the knowledge and experience of workers who are about to retire with younger employees, so that their valuable skills and expertise are not lost.

Working alongside the Workforce Development Councils, the TEC advice from the Waikato RSLG is aligned mostly to Muka Tangata, Hanga Aro Rau and Toi Mai in the following ways:

- **Muka Tangata**

Pastoral care is important to support pre-employment and new employees but also those wanting to step into leadership—there is need for leadership training in short courses. Tech advancement means people will require skills to keep up with automation and working

with machines. The education system must adapt and keep pace with changing technologies and the impact these have on work environments.

- **Hanga Aro Rau**

Standardised pathways to develop Computer Numerical Control skills. Standardised pathways to develop robotic welding skills. Digital skills that enable workers to engage with automation, digital systems, and data collection. Entry level skills to equip workers with knowledge to work in laboratory, environmental or quality assurance in food processing.

- **Toi Mai**

Aptitude with digital literacy skills is generally a key initial step at the front end of work processes. Focus needs to be placed on the creation of a future pipeline of digital competencies to be successfully learned by workers via associated training/programmes as automation takes hold in the workplace in the next 10 years.



From farm to port



TE AO MĀORI



WAIKATO WORKFORCE



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



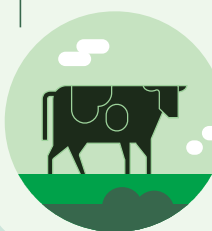
CLIMATE ADAPTION



FUTURE OF WORK

FROM THE FARM

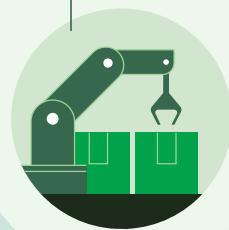
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY



MANUFACTURING & ENGINEERING



ACTIONS

TE AO MĀORI

Complete a stocktake of existing or planned iwi/Māori led local workforce programmes.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Work with stakeholders to research what the key regional implications of climate change are and how climate adaptation will impact Waikato businesses and workforce.

OUR WAIKATO WORKFORCE

Co-design, with local youth, community providers, employers and iwi/Māori, a shared framework for measuring the quality and impact of education to employment support services.

Partner with lead agencies to make sure programmes like Apprenticeship Support, FlexiWage, Mana in Mahi and Skills for Industry are being fully realised in sub-regional communities across the Waikato.

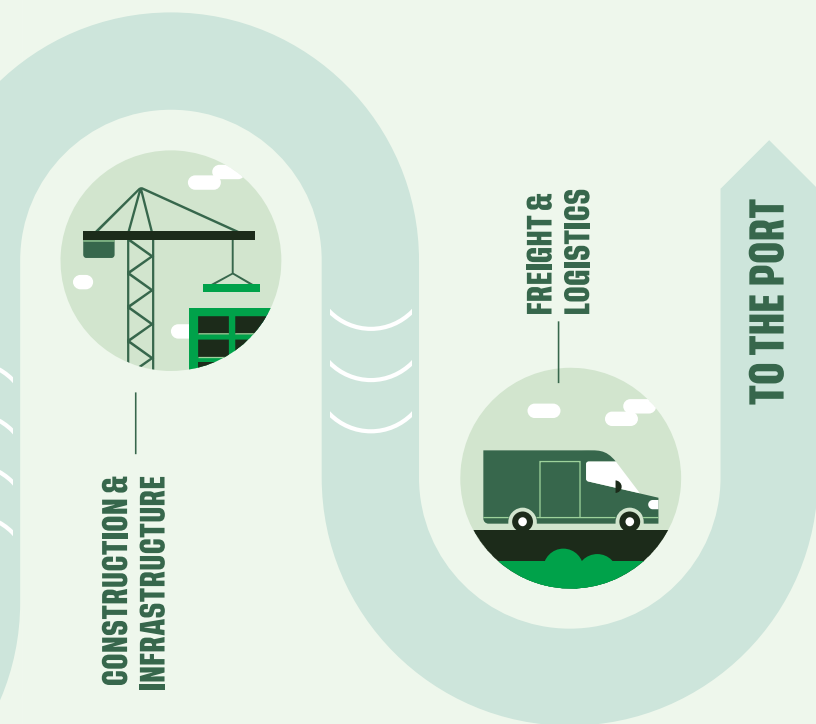
OUR WAIKATO WORKFORCE

Identify industries/employers in target priority industries across the Waikato that have workforces most impacted by Industry 4.0 and need support with the transitioning from manual skills to Industry 4.0 relevant digital skills; and develop programmes to support upskilling.

Consider the findings from the Diversity Works/ Construction Accord 'Diversity Roadmap' project and Waihangā Ara Hau 'Equity in Industry' workforce plan and identify actions and delivery mechanisms for the Waikato

Support the creation of flexible learning environments to encourage part-time on-the-job and off-the-job learning.

Increase the provision and accessibility of drivers licensing services across Waikato.



Ōritetanga Equity

Every person in the Waikato should receive the support they need to succeed in education and achieve decent and rewarding employment to lead fulfilling lives.

He Tangata People

Our people are our greatest asset with their health and wellbeing as a priority.

Whakangungu ahumahi Industry Training

We focus on key sectors of the Waikato economy.

Te anga whakamua The future

New technologies means new opportunities to develop our workforce.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Advocate to remove barriers and fast-tracking in the health sector with a focus on local and migrant training. Promote for employer skill needs to be met in the health sector, especially in Kaiāwhina roles.

DIGITAL CAPABILITY & THE FUTURE OF WORK

Identify industry-led existing programmes, including those that support employers to be ‘better employers’, that will be most impactful for attracting, training and retaining workers across the Waikato, and advocate for prioritised delivery into sub-regions.

PRIMARY INDUSTRY

Establish the ‘Waikato Futures Academy’ that supports both current and future skills needs of the primary industries and added value manufacturing sectors, including Agritech, Biotech, Agribusiness, Environmental and Future Foods capabilities.

MANUFACTURING & ENGINEERING

Develop a pilot “Tuakana teina” reciprocal skills transfer programme to support years of work experience, practical skills and sector knowledge transfer from older/retiring workers to new/youth workers; and digital and ICT skills from younger workers to older workers.

CONSTRUCTION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Advocate for increased support for Te Waharoa – Gateway to the Trades programme and explore potential to extend the model to other iwi / industries in the Waikato region.

FREIGHT & LOGISTICS

Support ‘Road to Success Programme’ for the Waikato region which focuses on growing the pipeline of truck drivers, including exploring opportunities to increase the pipeline of female drivers.

PROGRESS ON 2022 - 2023 ACTIONS

ACTION GROUP/THEME

RWP ACTIONS

KEY MILESTONES



PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Establish the 'Waikato Futures Academy' that supports both current and future skills needs of the primary industries and added value manufacturing sectors, including Agritech, Biotech, Agribusiness, Environmental and Future Foods capabilities.

- Collaboration work discussions of a Futures Academy are underway – serving Dairy, Beef-Lamb, Aquaculture and Horticulture. In the first instance engagement with key stakeholders to be held on how best to tackle workforce skill challenges in the short, medium and long term ultimately building an education identity for the region (with a technology component to it) where people can go to gain skills desired by the Primary and other sectors (e.g., Manufacturing).
- Starting with Dairy, the RSLG is confident that many of the relevant skills programmes (practical and more formal) across the region already exist and that co-ordination, enabling relationships, connections and communication are key to pulling the sector pipeline together through schools into the Primary sector.



CONSTRUCTION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Develop broader professional standards for the industry that build capability and capacity and support a career in construction:

- Work with industry partners to identify critical skills (e.g., literacy and numeracy); skills in contracts, risk and business management; and life skills and make sure the Waihangā Ara Rau micro-credential programme aligns with real sector needs.

- The RSLG is engaging with industry and schools to gain a clearer "picture" of workforce needs across the Waikato as they relate to Construction and Infrastructure and to understand what appears to be coming out of the following areas:
 - Labour market competition: that is, whether investment policies within firms include attracting talent/retaining skills – e.g., knowledge being passed on by older to younger workers – and if this is not the case then the reasons why this is not so.
 - Communications strategy with schools: Does industry need to become more contextualised in the education system? If so, how would this be achieved? This revolves around what schools are doing to make the C&I industry more visible and interesting enough for students to want to pursue it as a pathway to employment.
 - Support for businesses: Medium sized firms in C&I appear to be trading off apprenticeships and training schemes in favour of meeting client demands for increased efficiency and productivity. This is because they do not have the capacity and sometimes foresight to realise concurrent skills development and output continuities.



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Appoint a Futurist to support ongoing regional workforce plan development.

- This is part of the Digital Capability/Future of Work section of the Plan (actions 18 and 19). The RSLG brought on a "futurist" to help identify how the application of technology will transform the Waikato economy. These were in areas of climate, logistics, food, and rising inequality. By continuously looking to the future, we will better understand the possibilities and labour market opportunities across the Waikato.



ICT

Support the 'Equitable Opportunities for Tech Employment' pilot initiative to simplify and improve the tech education-to-employment pathway so there are equitable opportunities for a wider spectrum of learners. Resulting in a deep pipeline of locally grown, diverse work-ready tech talent that can support industry, iwi (Waikato Tainui) and regional growth.

- RSLG has engaged with Māori digital technology practitioners positioning rangatahi Māori and peering them up with experts in the field facilitating participation of diversity via 10 internships premised on the gap between what is on offer within the industry and those working in the sector.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- RSLG will be engaging with Te Pukenga and Muka Tangata to shape a workforce planning approach. This will be an activator for projects such as the Futures Academy (currently at the information gathering stage) synthesizing meaningful planning between communities/industry and the requirements set down by learning standards including for those who may wish to transfer between sectors.

-
- The crux of this work is to understand the workforce skills gap in the Waikato C&I sector to help develop a clear problem definition along with suggested solutions.
 - There will likely be work with Waihangā Ara Rau to ensure that any micro-credential programme that is developed aligns with C&I sector needs when applied regionally. Removal of any barriers in relation to workforce participation in C&I will:
 - Attract and retain staff through skills development building resilience and future ready workers in C&I.
 - Facilitate changes in the mindsets of students such that they can see themselves in C&I ensuring a strong school to industry worker pipeline.
 - Enable workforce participation and skills transition making workplace learning function better especially within small to medium sized businesses or within clusters of these businesses primarily achieved by leveraging relationships with companies who have successful recruitment/training/skills development programmes for guidance.

-
- The insights have been used to inform future recommendations and relevant actions in the RWP.

-
- Getting a full picture across the Waikato garnering opportunities to close labour market gaps
 - getting rangatahi Māori into the industry by familiarising them with digital technology and attracting/retaining individuals in the sector 10 internship awards.
-

ACTION GROUP/THEME

RWP ACTIONS

KEY MILESTONES



FREIGHT & LOGISTICS

Support 'Road to Success Programme' for the Waikato region which focuses on growing the pipeline of truck drivers, including exploring opportunities to increase the pipeline of female drivers.

- Te Waka has led engagement with the relevant WDCs (Hanga-Aro-Rau and Ringa Hora) and industry to identify key challenges and opportunities to support workforce development for the Freight and Logistics sector in the Waikato region. Te Waka has hosted several workshops in the region, focussed around talent attraction, talent retention and community engagement, bringing together representatives from the WDCs, employers and education/ training providers. Through this engagement we have identified priority areas for assistance:
 - Building school and community connections
 - Literacy and numeracy support
 - Pre-employment support and recruitment
 - Assessor training and licensing support
- In our engagement with Tainui Group Holdings in relation to the Ruakura Superhub, we have identified that there will be ~7,000 new job opportunities at the Superhub in the coming years. We have been engaging with key employers at the Superhub, such as Kmart) to understand their workforce needs and training plans to determine how the RSLG can best support the projected workforce growth in the region. To date, collaboration between Kmart and MSD has successfully resulted in the placement of 100 positions.



RANGATAHI

Expand on existing mentoring programmes that support young people entering education, training, or work.

- The RSLG has collaborated with MSD, Youth Training and Employment, and the Ministry of Education to research and create a stocktake of high performing Waikato-based providers who offer education to training/ employment transition support services for youth across the region. Feedback from employers indicated a need for more young employees to develop 'work-ready' skills and there appeared to be duplication and fragmentation of support services offered in the Waikato. The stocktake/research showed:
 - the current provision of services did not match geographical need and were heavily focused in the city centre
 - work-ready support made up the largest proportion of support services
- Therefore, services were least accessible to the people who needed them the most (e.g., Māori and young people), often leading to rural communities creating their own place-based services, to accommodate the needs of young people and their whānau.
- The stocktake was geared towards completing the workforce "picture" across the region to understand how the current support provision is impacting education, training and employment outcomes as these relate to rangatahi.



WAIKATO WORKFORCE

- Identify industry-led existing programmes, including those that support employers to be 'better employers', that will be most impactful for attracting, training and retaining workers across the Waikato, and advocate for prioritised delivery into subregions.
- Improve the quality of careers guidance for young people in the Waikato by increasing connections between industry and careers advisors to provide a greater understanding of future workforce needs and more industry pathway options for school leavers across the Waikato.

- The RSLG is supportive of Smart Waikato work to co-ordinate business, education and government agencies to improve education to employment pathways for our rangatahi.
- RSLG is broaching youth employment pathway workforce resilience through consultation processes with local councils bringing its unique perspectives on the connection between not having enough of these pathways and the impacts on communities because of this.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Te Waka is leading engagement with industry representatives to identify and co-design pilot opportunities to address the priority areas for assistance. The objective is to support tangible action in the region that can be trialled and then (if successful) rolled out to other regions in Aotearoa New Zealand.
 - We will continue to engage with key employers at the Superhub to understand their workforce needs and training plans, with a focus on identifying opportunities to encourage adoption of standardised qualifications. There is an opportunity to incorporate this into the entry-level NZQA logistics and supply chain qualifications, which we understand are due to be reviewed in 2027.
-
- After much consultation with stakeholders in the youth support space, the stocktake and research identified the need to work towards:
 - Increasing visibility and connectivity of current support services – helping rangatahi to find the support they need facilitating transition into higher education, training and employment
 - Optimising provision of services – to help prioritise resources and industry connections for areas and groups with high need and identifying what is required for current support provision to make assistance more accessible, relevant and impactful for young people
 - Addressing these gaps will lead to improvements in the quality and impact of the education to employment support service provision for youth in the Waikato.
-
- RSLG will be engaging with local councils to drive forward workforce planning through long term plans including improved employability skills amongst youth. Such discussions will facilitate meaningful planning between communities and current/future Waikato leaders regarding improved employment outcomes for rangatahi.
 - This approach is geared towards completing part of the school to employment pathway “picture” across the Waikato garnering opportunities to help close labour market gaps by building resilient workforce pipelines.
-

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Prioritisation sets the agenda in terms of what really matters, which is reflected in how resources are allocated. Stakeholder engagement was instrumental in helping the RSLG to identify and prioritise the necessary actions outlined in the RWP, while still being able to meet the desired outcomes of the workforce plan.

ACTIONS

PRIORITIES



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES & ICT

- Overarching oversight of the sectors to identify digital technologies and applications to support the region. Areas of interest include Agritech, Education, Health and Artificial Intelligence.
- A more fundamental change for training Tech talent in the region is required that needs to be developed in partnership with industry. As part of this development the RSLG will discover whether the Digital ITP can be leveraged in some way and how the RSLG can get in behind to support this.
- Getting a lay of the land in relation to where the Tech requirements are in other sectors in terms of what sectors are doing well but could be accelerated with a Tech interface.
- Engaging/intervening much earlier to inspire more girls, Māori and Pasifika to consider tech as a career pathway, and for the schools/curriculum to be more actively supporting this.
- Waikato tech leaders are clear that a digital/ICT apprenticeship model is something they would like to explore but there does not appear to be the appetite/progress with tertiary providers to move in this direction. The RSLG could prioritise this to realise longer term outcomes through an advocacy lens but by first discovering whether there are existing initiatives that could be tapped into for this kind of model to be implemented.
- Advocate for providers that are already doing good work regarding the initiation of Tech hubs and see if we can help get more funding sent their way to do more of this work across the region.
- Te Waka will continue to contribute towards supporting the 'Equitable Opportunities for Tech Employment' pilot initiative to simplify and improve the tech education-to-employment pathway so there are equitable opportunities for a wider spectrum of learners. This will be partly achieved via its Tech Student Speed Networking event; however, it only goes toward solving part of the puzzle, The RSLG would like to keep this goal as a priority but acknowledges that it will be tackled a bit at a time between Te Waka, the Cultivate Trust, and the Tertiary Tech Alliance.



FREIGHT & LOGISTICS

- Going forward the plan is for the RSLG (led by Te Waka) to undertake 1-2 pilots focused on the Commercial Road Transport segment in relation to talent attraction/retention – trialled in the region (and championed for other regions) to garner feasibility of proposed approaches.
- From a practical perspective we expect the pilots to support four key areas: (i) facilitating better connections between our local educators and employers; (ii) raising awareness about what is already happening within the region (this is a challenge); (iii) leaning further into underserved communities to unlock the potential in the workforce in the region including from migrants, women returning to work and neurodiverse groups; and (iv) showcasing the region as a great place to live and work.



CLIMATE CHANGE

- Working with Workforce Development Councils on their programmes for Climate Change and promoting these within the Waikato, focusing on:
 - Climate impact on farming and programmes for carbon monitoring
 - Electrical training for solar installations
 - Hydrogen fuels and its engineering impacts for fuel station installations, hydrogen in pipelines which is related to the operation of hydrogen trucks
 - Considerations for future wood pellet boilers
 - Micro-credentialing
- Support research around the impact of climate on the sectors most impacted due to carbon mitigation and adaption programmes.
- Advocate/promote training programmes for schools and communities.

ACTIONS

PRIORITIES



PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

- Continue to assess the concept of a future primary sector academy with Muka Tangata and Food & Fibre CoVE to find out the current and future needs for the farming sector and its workforce. The initial focus is on the dairy sector with a view to extend to the wider sector. Areas of training would focus on animal welfare, environmental requirements, farm machinery and technology, and future foods.



WAIKATO WORKFORCE (WITH A FOCUS ON RANGATAHI)

- Support industry to re-boot apprentice programmes which are relevant to their sectors, including Energy, Water and Infrastructure.
- Promote employer skill needs to be met in electrical, civil and mechanical.
- Supporting local initiatives focused on rangatahi into training and employment in rural areas such as Waitomo, Otorohanga and South Waikato.
- Advocate and collaborate with agencies to promote pathways from education/training into meaningful employment:
 - Support SMART Waikato around its programmes of connecting rangatahi via schools with industry.
 - Collaborate with WDCs to develop qualifications and micro-credentials that address unmet skill needs.
 - Promote soft and hard skills for rangatahi, related to work ethic, reliability and financial literacy, for employment stability and promotion.
 - Support and promote forums to bring exposure to learning technologies to our rangatahi.



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Advocate to remove barriers and fast-tracking in the health sector with a focus on local and migrant training:
 - Promote Māori and Pacific students to take health, science and maths-based subjects at secondary school
 - Support/advocate for initiatives that attract/retain Māori and Pacific students into careers and relevant internships within health
 - Support Māori into mentoring and leadership training
- Promote for employer skill needs to be met in the health sector, especially in Kaiāwhina roles:
 - Identify learn-as-you-earn training and development opportunities to upskill kaiāwhina noting the needs to be flexible, low-cost and close to home.

WAIKATO REGIONAL SKILLS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Co-Chairs



Brendon Green



Keith Ikin

Regional Public Services Commissioner



Tracey Smith

Members



Adam Fletcher



Chris Lewis



David Hallett



Paula Baker



Melinda Deller



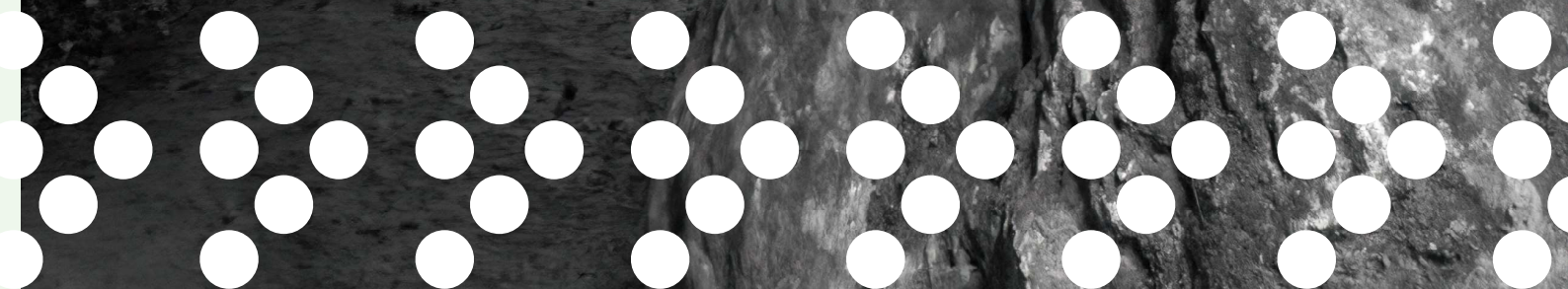
Rosie Spragg



Sarah Flavall



Tom Buckley





Find out more
www.mbie.govt.nz/waikato-rslg

Get in contact
WaikatoRSLG@mbie.govt.nz

