

TOP REGIONAL INSIGHTS

Southland Murihiku 2023 Regional Workforce Plan (RWP) Update is now available. The Update reflects on RSLG mahi over the past year, refines the areas of focus, and spotlights emerging and evolving sectors – aquaculture, renewable energy (hydrogen), and construction. The document is designed to be read alongside the 2022 Regional Workforce Plan and will guide our mahi over the coming year. You can view the Update at [Southland Murihiku Regional Workforce Plan 2023 Update | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment](#).



‘Beyond 2025 Southland’ Regional Long-Term Strategy launched June 28. The strategy aims to create a shared future vision and pathway for Southland Murihiku, and is based on the principle of whakamana (empowerment) and aspirations identified for the people, environment, and economy of the region. Workforce is identified as one of the region’s essential enablers, and implementation of the RSLG RWP is noted as being key to ensuring the development of a thriving regional labour market. Aligning the Beyond 2025 strategy and RWP implementation is a priority for the RSLG, particularly from a labour market perspective, and will include the RSLG contributing to the implementation planning for the strategy’s workforce workstream.

Hokonui Locality are re-thinking community health and wellbeing in their recent plan. Hokonui Locality provides place-based planning for health and wellbeing services. It is focused on helping whānau stay well; giving iwi and communities a stronger voice in deciding what’s needed locally; and bringing health and wellbeing organisations together to improve people’s healthcare experience. Hokonui is one of the first 12 locality networks established across the motu implementing a place-based approach. The Hokonui Locality Plan articulates a strong message from the Mataura Valley/Māruawai community that access to knowledgeable medical practitioners, who listen to and take their voice seriously, is essential to understanding and supporting mental and physical health requirements. The plan identifies the need to map out those skills and then determine where the gaps are. The Locality work aligns with the recently released Ministry of Health Rural Health Strategy, which identifies the need to better value the rural health workforce and support them to meet the broader health requirements of rural communities. The RSLG is ideally positioned to support this mahi and help in the development of a local workforce plan focused on addressing the skills and workforce needs of community health.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE



Southland Murihiku Health Care and Social Assistance Workforce

5,450 employees represent **9.8%** of our regional labour market – making Health Care and Social Assistance the third biggest industry in the region. This is forecast to grow to **5,645 by 2028** – which still may not be enough to meet the needs of our aging population.

86.3% of the workforce are women - Health Care and Social Assistance is a female-dominated industry. In 2022 only 748 workers (13.7%) identified as male, whereas 4,702 identified as female.

10.1% of the workforce are Māori – reflective of the overall population in Murihiku, but not necessarily reflective of the patient population due to systemic health care issues.

15.2% of the workforce are **Personal Care Assistants**, with **Registered Nurses (Medical) making up 13.2%** of the workforce.

Source: Infometrics, Health Care and Social Assistance Sector Profile 2022

TOP LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Pathways Leadership Breakfast is being planned to bring schools and employers together. Following highly successful similar events held in Christchurch and Dunedin earlier this year, the Southland Murihiku RSLG is partnering with the Ministry of Education and Murihiku Regeneration to help schools and businesses explore practical ways of supporting young people as they transition from education into employment. The breakfast will provide an opportunity to share and discuss examples of activities that help young people connect to the world of work while they are at school, and how they can develop a future career pathway into adult life. The first event will be centred on ‘NELP 4 in Practice’, one of the five National Education and Learning Priorities, which focuses on the future of learning and work by encouraging schools to collaborate with industries and employers to ensure learners/ākonga have the skills, knowledge and pathways to succeed in work. It is anticipated this inaugural Pathways Leadership Breakfast will act as a catalyst for future events. Further details will be circulated as soon as they are confirmed.

Regional Employment Expo will be held in September. The Ministry of Social Development and Great South are collaborating to bring the Southland Job Expo to Invercargill, and the RSLG will join local employers, recruitment agencies, training providers and support organisations at the event. It is designed to provide direct recruitment opportunities, advice, support and information to jobseekers or those seeking career direction. The event will highlight new and emerging industries across the region, including sectors spotlighted in the 2023 RWP Update, such as Renewable Energy and Construction. A closed session of the Expo will be held for the approximate 220 H&J Smith employees affected by the company’s recent closure announcement, offering them career advice alongside information on alternative jobs in the region.

Research to be conducted on the impact of migrant labour numbers increasing in Southland. The RSLG are undertaking research to understand how increasing migrant labour is impacting local support agencies. Anecdotal evidence provided to the RSLG has indicated that migrant support services in the region are almost at capacity. The research will be undertaken through the lens of the 2022 Regional Workforce Plan (RWP) aspirations and will contribute to progressing several actions in the 2023 RWP Update (including actions 1, 2 and 5). This research will also support the Beyond 2025 Southland strategy’s workforce stream, as well as contributing to other priorities within the strategy focused on the attraction and retention of people.

Alignment between new health sector plans highlights opportunities to enhance the Māori health workforce in the region. The recently released [Health Workforce Plan 2023/24](#) from Te Whatu Ora, and the Pae Tū: Hauora Māori Strategy 2023 released by Te Aka Whai Ora have both highlighted several issues that were also recognised in the 2022 Regional Workforce Plan (RWP) and 2023 RWP Update. This includes failure to grow our health workforce by training, recruiting and retaining people in the numbers we need, particularly those with the right skills and qualifications, as well as the required diversity. The anticipated outcome of this alignment of focus areas will be:

- Enhancing Māori representation in the health sector (currently only 3 percent of the national workforce)
- Improving health outcomes for Māori by having better recognition and application of Te Ao Māori models of practice
- Supporting the wider sector by increasing health worker numbers in the currently strained labour market

REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN

The 2023 Regional Workforce Plan Update has been published. The Update spotlights three evolving and emerging sectors vital to the future of Murihiku:

- Te Pūkao Whakahou – Te Hauwai | Renewable Energy – Hydrogen
- Te Ahumoana | Aquaculture
- Kā Mahi Waihaka | Construction

The constantly evolving nature of our economy puts emphasis on our need to be agile in responding to changing workforce and skills requirements. In the Update, these three sectors are considered in detail alongside steps that can be taken by the region to support their labour market needs.

The Southland Murihiku RSLG will also look to address region-specific challenges and uncertainties through a refocused action plan, that will drive positive and wide-ranging vocational education and labour market outcomes. These actions have been developed through the lens of the RSLG’s foundation aspirations and identify measures we can take to address workforce challenges as a region.

The full Regional Workforce Plan (2022) and the 2023 Update can be accessed [here](#).

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS:

- Welcoming and onboarding our new RSLG Co-chairs and members at the July hui
- Developing an implementation plan for the actions identified in the 2023 Regional Workforce Plan Update
- Exploring opportunities for how we might better integrate the region’s youth voice into RSLG mahi