

Hi,

New Zealand's transition to renewable energy and the increasing demand for energy resilience, has highlighted the long standing need for the creation of a formal trades training and structured career pathway for drillers and geothermal field technicians in New Zealand.

We would like to support the development of a national drilling trade qualification framework, including:

For example :

1. Introduction to Drilling operations – Level 2
2. Drilling Trade Certificate / Apprenticeship Pathway – NZQA Level 3
3. Advanced Drilling – Level 4
4. Specialisation Pathway / Endorsements – Level 5

Delivered through a mix of Block Courses and on the job training, with assessments against unit standards co-developed with industry.

Key challenges include:

- No formal NZQA-accredited apprenticeship or qualification pathway specifically for geothermal drilling
- No structured career pathway
- Aging workforce and lack of succession planning
- Increased health and safety risks due to skills gaps and inconsistent training standards
- Rapid growth in geothermal energy projects, requiring a skilled technical workforce
- Absence of alignment between industry needs and vocational education

National and Regional Benefits

- Safer, more productive drilling workforce
- Increased employment and progression opportunities, including for rangatahi and Māori in the trades
- Skills resilience for natural hazard response and infrastructure recovery
- Workforce to support MBIE's Renewable Energy Strategy, particularly geothermal

Drillers are critical to New Zealand's future — from unlocking geothermal energy to delivering safe drinking water and infrastructure. Yet, without structured training or a formal career path, the industry is constrained.

By supporting this proposal, MBIE can:

- Future-proof a high-demand trade
- Improve national safety and workforce standards
- Enable a just transition to a low-carbon, energy-secure future

We welcome the opportunity to work with MBIE and its partners to bring this vision to life.

Kind Regards

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