

Te Tai Poutini West Coast Region Skill Needs – Advice for the Tertiary Education Commission

Prepared by Te Tai Poutini West Coast Regional Skills Leadership Group

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) with insights from the Te Tai Poutini West Coast region to help guide investment processes and decisions for 2024. It also provides insights into potential future investment. An emphasis has been put on priority sectors as identified in the RWP.

This advice should be read in conjunction with the [Te Tai Poutini West Coast Regional Workforce Plan](#) and the [Regional Workforce Plan Supporting Document](#) which provides broader context and additional detail. An additional supporting document to accompany the RSLG advice to TEC is also available on request, this document provides background information to support recommendations.

We consulted with a cross section of stakeholders including central and local government, industry, employers, iwi, unions, workforce development councils, and other key community to shape this advice.

Regional Context and Workforce Aspirations

RWP Areas of Priority for the Region

The RSLG considers these sectors to be of strategic importance:

- Accommodation and Food Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Construction
- Manufacturing

Other sectors important to our region's economy and that are currently or are forecast to experience a shortage of workers include: **Food and Fibre, Tourism, Conservation/Biodiversity, Retail, Mining/Energy, Engineering, Advanced Digital/IT, and Education/Training/Professional Services.**

Regional skill needs

Accommodation and Food Services

Roles in accommodation and food services attract young and often less qualified staff. There is a strong reliance on migrants and a seasonal workforce into roles on the West Coast, particularly at peak times of the year. This results in a low employee retention rate. Despite staffing pressures easing the sector is still struggling to attract trained chefs. There is also local demand for regional-specific storytelling to enhance the visitor experience.

Recommendations: Investment in:

1. Hospitality and tourism training with a focus on chef training
2. Training that incorporates or focuses on local story telling
3. Micro credential for employability and soft skills that creates a pathway onto further study and can be offered across industries.

Health Care and Social Assistance

There are currently approximately 50 FTE vacancies within nursing roles across the region. There are significant vacancies across much of allied health - physiotherapy, social work, occupational therapy, and laboratory, and also a lack of permanent and locum GPs. The Māori and Pacific workforces are also in great shortage, compromising access to healthcare for these population groups. The region is highly reliant on tertiary provision from out of region. This includes shortages of more developed cultural skillsets that are urgently needed to grow and support kaimahi Māori and kaimahi Pacific.

Recommendations: Investment in:

1. Micro credentialing and/or qualifications/units for registered and administrative staff
2. Training offered at high schools to enable a pathway into tertiary study, e.g., Micro credential
3. Pre-health science papers delivered regionally
4. Programmes that support the kaiāwhina workforce
5. Training that enables the ability to complete distance learning. The Bachelor of Nursing, Enrolled Nursing, Return to Nursing and the two-year master's pathway are great opportunities to ensure education and training can be completed at, or close to a student's home
6. Earn while you learn for nursing that could mean TEC-funded transition placements
7. Distance learning options for ALL tertiary qualifications. Studying at distance removes one of the major financial barriers to education and enables access to remote learning. This would potentially improve retention and collaboration, enabling more remote training of health professionals so they can remain in their local communities as much as possible
8. Enabling access for rural and remote populations for existing qualifications that cannot be delivered in the region. This could include ring fencing positions for people who come from rural and remote locations
9. A local hub to ensure support for employers and students. CAP and Allied Health Return to Work, particularly Physiotherapy return to work could be streamlined. Ongoing collaboration is the key to success
10. Pastoral care - Peer support for students not always available if only 1 student here on placement away from their colleagues. AHST may be a way to provide a remote framework for this
11. Initiatives that address attrition rates for Māori and Pacific people and enable success including post-graduation
12. Change of classification of programme related and student related costs to allow for travel, food, and accommodation to be covered for programme placements.

Construction

Approximately 25% of those working in the construction industry on the West Coast are self-employed. While the construction industry is expected to grow businesses and there are a few large construction projects planned for the region, on the ground businesses do not expect demand for staff to grow as significantly as projected by the 2028 Informetric forecasts. Civil construction training is often in house and non-formal. Infrastructure jobs often require employees to operate various workplace machinery that requires a licence and endorsements. Technical roles are often the most challenging to recruit, e.g., cable jointers, line mechanics and water treatment operators.

Recommendations: Investment in:

1. Micro-credentials with learner-focussed modes of delivery
2. Initiatives that remove barriers to further study
3. Driver's licences in schools
4. Plant operator training (including licence and endorsements).

Manufacturing

In-house training is common across the manufacturing industry as training needs are often specific to bespoke machinery used by the business. Digital technologies are being integrated into larger business to improve productivity. Food manufacturing companies are experiencing difficulties in attracting staff due to the lack of accommodation and a high minimum start out wage with staff wanting to work 4 days a week rather than 5. There is a training gap in forestry for training of staff in middle management/leadership.

Recommendations: Investment in:

1. Micro credentials that support the manufacturing industry
2. Initiatives that remove barriers to further study
3. Training that supports digital technologies
4. Leadership and management training.

Conservation and Biodiversity

Te Tai Poutini West Coast is 84% public conservation land, the largest proportion of any rohe in New Zealand. Conservation (Nature Based) is an emerging industry on the West Coast. There is a desire to 'Grow our Own' people and staircase them to opportunities in the industry on the West Coast. A pipeline from high school onto tertiary study is currently lacking. Key stakeholders support the noted provision. Indicative demand for 2024 and 2025 can be found in the 'Supporting Document' to TEC advice document (available upon request).

Recommendation: Investment in:

1. Certificate in Conservation Skills (operations) Level 4
2. Certificate in Pest Management Level 3
3. Project Management Skills
4. Geographic Information Systems
5. Conservation Field Skills Training Scheme
6. Regenerative Destination Management
7. Pest and Predator Control Technologies
8. Cultural Capability for Māori Tourism Guides
9. Conservation Leadership.

Food and Fibre (Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Aquaculture)

The dairy industry is experiencing significant workforce shortages. Approximately 22% of the workforce are migrant workers and the industry does not have enough people with the right skills to meet workforce demand. The sector is heavily reliant on people to operate with a significant component of their workforce in entry level positions. Gaps in labour exist around seasonal work while the number of people entering apprenticeships has fallen. Specific training needs include milk quality, health and safety, effluent, and animal welfare. micro credentials at diploma level covering the use of technology on farms to improve business processes such as the use of drones or halters.

Recommendation: Investment in:

1. Introduction micro credentials that incorporate soft/transferrable skills that can also be delivered in schools to create a pipeline and pathway for students into the industry
2. Micro credentials that support compliance requirements
3. Micro credentials that support the use technology on farms to improve business processes
4. Training for migrant workers for 'essential service' industries.

Emerging Industries and Future Training/Skills Needs

Extractives, Mining, and Energy – Renewable Energy

Renewable energy is an emerging industry on the West Coast. [Te Tai o Poutini West Coast renewable energy strategy](#) identifies and advances opportunities in hydro, biomass, geothermal, green hydrogen, and other energy opportunities on the West Coast with a focus on viable outcomes that create jobs. Increasing capabilities and improving coordination has been identified as one of four vital strategy areas of the renewable energy roadmap.

Recommendations: Investment in:

1. Training that supports the renewable energy strategy including engineering and research science.

Key themes of our engagement with WDCs and TEOs

The West Coast is a challenging region in which to provide accessible, flexible learning opportunities. Its main constraints include a small population spread over a large distance, limited mobile coverage, no public transport and frequent significant weather events. Providing equitable access to learners is therefore a significant issue.

Key themes:

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi needs to be honoured in training
- The pathway through a programme may be different for each learner, and should no longer be cohort based
- The need for sufficient pastoral care for learners and workers to enable success
- Identified issues/barriers to effective training e.g., literacy/numeracy/digital skills not in place to the degree required for the qualification/training
- A shift in assessment approach to provide greater equity for learners
- The type of training required by the region is not conducive to optimal cohort sizes
- Modes of delivery need to be flexible, and learner focussed – e.g., in the workplace, block course, night class, or online, depending on the work learners are exposed to and how they would like to learn
- The need for right sized learning - logical blocks of learning
- The demand for micro credentials and short/sharp training
- Requirement for flexibility to enable people to transition in and out of employment and study easily
- Some population groups are underrepresented in training. This situation also presents an opportunity to strengthen the workforce. Provision needs to meet the needs of the changing workforce – Māori, job changers, women returning to work, women in non-traditional industries, mature people, and people with disabilities or health challenges
- The system does not currently respond quickly to demand and change
- Better provision for rural community, industry workforces and learners
- Leadership/people management training required in most industries
- Lack of employability/soft skills/self-awareness
- Concerns on how the Te Pūkenga operating model will impact learners and future labour market. The need for a model that serves the needs of all learners providing for and considering rural and remote communities
- Funding: One model does not fit all. The Unified Funding System does not work for regions and does not allow for regions to meet regional demand. Funding should be based on outcomes and aligned to regional needs
- Initiatives including Mana and Mahi, Apprenticeship Boost, Upskill, Mayors Task Force for Jobs and TTAF have made training attractive. There are concerns about the flow-on effect for the key West Coast industries and staff retention with some funding streams ending and having no certainty about others.

Tertiary Education Specific Advice

TEO's consulted have indicated they require provision for 2023 to be rolled over for 2024. This section outlines any increases in provision requirements for TEO's delivering tertiary education on the West Coast and does not include requirements for training that is not delivered on the West Coast – noting that the region has a high reliance on out of region provision. Supporting evidence is available in the 'Supporting Document' to TEC advice document (available upon request).

Recommendation: Investment in new provision:

Primary

1. New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills (Level 3)
2. New Zealand Certificate in Seafood Processing (Level 3)
3. National Certificate in Seafood Processing (Level 2)

Environmental

4. Certificate in Central Back Country and Predator Elimination Skills (micro credential)
5. Certificate in Track Maintenance (Level 3) (micro credential)
6. Certificate in Track Construction (Level 3) (micro credential)

'On the horizon 2024/25'

7. Cookery (Level 4) - Flexible delivery that blends in-work and on campus delivery
8. New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing (Level 3)
9. New Zealand Certificate in Skills for living for supported learning (Level 1)
10. New Zealand Certificate in Business (introduction to small business)
11. Pre-construction trade soft/ skill intro to workplace
12. New Zealand Certificate in Pest Operations (Level 3) monitoring and/or control strand
13. Training scheme in Tourism Māori Guiding (Level 3)
14. Horticulture (Level 4) Nursery Skills - Regeneration of native forests
15. New Zealand Certificate in Conservation Operations (Level 4)
16. River Ranger
17. Conservation Leadership
18. New Zealand Certificate in Sustainable Primary Production (Level 4)
19. Micro credentials in environmental monitoring (freshwater monitoring for farmers, carbon forestry monitoring, shellfish and kaimoana monitoring, monitoring of restoration sites, etc.)
20. Regenerative Tourism Training
21. New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 3)
22. New Zealand Certificate in Study and Career Preparation Pre-health Pathway (Level 4)
23. New Zealand Certificate in Sustainable Primary Production (Level 4)
24. Regenerative tourism (growing, harvesting, and eating food from a farm, beekeeping or trapping while looking for kiwi).

Recommendation: Increase of investment in:

Foundation and supported learning

25. Training scheme in Hospitality Supported Learning (Level 1)

PTE Funding

26. PTE ACE provision to meets regional needs.

Recommendation: Funding

27. A funding system that delivers on regional needs. One size does not fit all
28. Fund training on projected demand rather than EFTS
29. Development of a contestable fund for 'employability skill development'.

Careers System Specific Advice

Recommendations:

1. Developing of a careers strategy that is inclusive of all from 3 years to life
2. A co-ordinated, easy to navigate approach to careers education across agencies that removes barriers to access
3. Adequate resource dedicated to a pro-active 'top of the cliff' approach to careers and pathways advice and support
4. Enable greater integration between secondary schooling and tertiary and vocational learning needs to be promoted at a much earlier age, e.g., Kia ora Hauora model
5. Funding for a dedicated team to build connections between local employers, educators (secondary & tertiary) and students and support careers pathways in schools. Connections need to be facilitated by a neutral entity that is resourced to operate at regional scale and can operate across multiple programmes
6. A collaborative approach to careers involving whanau, business, industry, and community. This includes educating and influencing the influencers, e.g., industry assistance for students with subject selection at school – enabling students to plan their progression into post-secondary school education and training
7. Facilitating an awareness of career opportunities in pre-school, primary and secondary schools. This includes aligning opportunities available in the region. In rural areas, pupils may not have experiential awareness of the types of careers available to them. Exposure to career pathways is different to urban areas
8. Inspire and inform rangatahi through relevant and experiential curriculum. This includes developing a career pathway programme with milestones from pre-school
9. Careers to be integrated into subject areas in curriculum
10. Resource to develop bespoke regional curriculum content for local schools to use
11. Free access for schools to a 'Bank of Resources' which includes a mix of online and hands-on e.g., SSEP, EndorseMe, School Kit, MyMahi, etc
12. Provision of 1:1 face to face dedicated career advice (non-teaching) from secondary school and beyond
13. Increased funding for the West Coast Trades Academy as this is a successful pathway programme into further study and employment. In 2023, the West Coast Trades Academy (WCTA) received 310 expressions of interests from students in years 11 to 15 across the West Coast region. It interviewed 289 students, allocating a final 242 places. Funding from the MoE covers 212 of these places, the remaining 30 places were funded in 2023 by alternative means. Of those interviewed, 47 students missed out. In 2024, the MoE has strongly signalled to WCTA that there will be no more funding for WCTA, so WCTA expects to fund 212 places again. In a time of economic growth and continued severe skill shortages, particularly in vocational pathway sectors, we know this to be a hugely underfunded sector of our education system for our region
14. Funding on outcomes for Gateway provision over credit attainment
15. Resource to embed life skills and career education into general learning, e.g., drivers' licence in schools
16. TEC to develop a contestable fund to enable regions to apply for funding to meet regional needs. The fund provide scope to enable regions to test, develop and implement initiatives that work for their region e.g.
 - a. West Coast Pre-school Prototype - a co-created prototype project to support the development and testing of resources to support careers in pre and primary school
 - b. Programmes that develop transferrable/soft skills, - e.g., BCITO WorkStart programme that covers transferrable and soft skills while gaining a taste of the range of opportunities available in the construction sector
17. Funding to support students start apprenticeships at school, blurring the lines between school and tertiary
18. A clear line of site of relevance of learnings or transferrable skills to careers. Support by mapping and promoting careers pathways and entry points of these, timings/durations of pathways and the cross over through sectors. This could be integrated as an interactive feature of Tahatū. Several industries have started this work, e.g. The World of Tourism | Go with Tourism. However, it needs to be across industries.