

Advice to the Tertiary Education Commission on regional skill needs.

April 6, 2023

Introduction

In preparing this advice for the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) the Waikato RSLG engaged with several employers, peak bodies, unions, tertiary institutes, private training establishments, government agencies, local government, and communities from across the Waikato RSLG area.

This advice centers on the key sectors and actions that were surfaced in the [Waikato Regional Workforce Plan](#):

- Digital Capability
- Primary Industry
- Manufacturing and Engineering
- Construction and Infrastructure
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Digital Capability

Digital capability transcends all sectors and is the

Industry stakeholders advise that despite the large number of workers in the sector, finding skilled workers is a challenge; there are no standard industry measures in place to adequately assess worker skill level. An example being the distinction between ITC practitioners and ITC professionals.

Waikato ITC sector leaders continue to advocate for the creation of an apprenticeship programme for further development of targeted microcredentials. Navigating career pathways within the sector is often unclear.

Recommendations for Investment:

1. The creation of an ITC apprenticeship program – degree level qualifications are too long (3-4 years)
2. More Systems Thinking training is needed to elevate design skills
3. [Initiatives that increase Māori and Pasifika participation in the industry](#), P-Tech Aotearoa
4. [Cyber security training programs](#).
5. Cloud computing training
6. Data analytics and Business Intelligence
7. Micro-credentials

Waikato Construction and Infrastructure

The industry continues to grow despite the strain on businesses who find it difficult to retain skilled and unskilled labour. Waikato employers are bracing for further shortages as opportunities for the anticipated re-build in the Tai Rāwhiti and Hawkes Bay regions present. The attraction of the Australian opportunities is being felt across the Waikato. 2020 data shows that 74 percent of Waikato's Construction workforce came from different sectors; almost 10 percent came from secondary school. Apprenticeship Boost has helped support new people into the industry. Iwi partners have signaled that the Maori and Pasifika Trade Training program is a model that resonates with them and have voiced their desire to have this program opened up to them to deliver.

Recommendations for Investment:

1. Clear signposting to clearly inform Iwi how to navigate the pathway to becoming a training provider
 - a. TEC would benefit by being involved early in the conversation with Iwi as more post settlement government entities are established.
2. More training targeting women, Women in Trades Program, Girls with Hi-Vis
 - a. Waikato lacks diversity in the workforce, with only 12.5% of workers in Construction being female.
3. Support the ongoing success of the Waikato-Tainui Waharoa program. The model that Waikato-Tainui have developed requires support to implement it across other sectors. Māori make up almost 28 percent of the region's Construction workforce (just over 2.5 percent identify as Pasifika). Since beginning in 2020 the program has supported 30 learners through to jobs and apprenticeships; all remain currently employed.
4. Foundation Literacy and Numeracy programs – employers advise that there are many people in the industry for whom the current foundation programs are too advanced and require a bridging program.

Freight and Logistics

Waikato is the heart of the Golden Triangle, with significant volumes of freight generated from and passing through the region daily. With investment in major freight and logistics assets such as the Ruakura Inland Port and strong forecast population growth in the region, the freight and logistics sector is expected to be an important source of growth for the Waikato. The shortage of truck drivers grows with each retiring driver; employers advise of the difficulty in attracting, training and retaining staff. The Freight and Logistics sector employs 7,064 workers across the Waikato, with 2,337 workers in Hamilton City. The sector has a heavy reliance on a male workforce (77.8% male and 22.2% female) and most workers are low-skilled (74.3%). Only 19.7% of the workforce identifies as Māori, and 61% have no post-school qualification.

Recommendations for Investment

1. Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting New Zealand has collaborated with various parties to develop a programme called Te ara ki Tua | Road to Success. The programme connects potential truck drivers and employers to enable trainees to complete a 12-month training course with a mixture of online and paid on the job training.
 - Building stronger connections between employers, educators and students
 - Developing bespoke regional curriculum content
 - Embedding life skills and career education into general learning
 - Supporting employers that are engaging with rangatahi
2. MITO Micro-credentials gained through the Startup, Shiftup, Rockup and Loadup programmes
 - Building stronger connections between employers, educators and students
 - Developing bespoke regional curriculum content
 - Embedding life skills and career education into general learning
 - Supporting employers that are engaging with rangatahi

Primary Industries

Primary industry leaders in the Dairy Cow sector have identified a lack of support for upskilling and career progression as a major gap in the training programs delivered across the region. This is a significant issue, as upskilling and career progression are essential for workers to remain competitive in the primary industries. Without support for upskilling and career progression, workers may lack the necessary knowledge and experience to effectively carry out their duties.

Recommendations for Investment:

1. Support for non-formal training (on-farm practical skills) offered through organisations like Dairy NZ, Dairy Women's Network, Vet clinics and Beef & Lamb NZ.
2. Dairy Training offer a range of courses on behalf of Wintec Te Pukenga and Primary ITO for dairy farmers and rural professionals delivered by farmers as tutors in a format suitable for those employed full-time. The courses include practical skills to support on-farm duties and courses to run the farm that offer Level 3, 4 and 5 credits

Manufacturing

Waikato's Manufacturing sector faces several training gaps that need to be addressed to ensure the industry's growth and sustainability. Waikato is facing a shortage of skilled workers due to the aging workforce, low levels of training, and limited access to training opportunities. Industry 4.0 is an integral part of the growth and sustainability of the sector; Waikato employers recognise this and require access to more training programs that will better support workers to confidently transition to digital technologies.

Recommendations for Investment:

1. Support for employers with aging workers to help train new workers in the industry
 - a. Investment at the end of a worker's career like the Apprenticeship Boost
 - b. Years of experience and institutional knowledge remains in the industry
2. Digital skills training that will facilitate an easeful transition for workers into higher-skilled roles.
3. Support the unit standard review of the Level 3 Primary Products Food Processing Qualification with strands in Laboratory Skills, Environmental Systems, and Product Quality
 - a. As the Waikato Primary Industry responds to the effects of Climate Change, new food processing technologies will require a skilled and knowledgeable workforce will be required to design the food processing operation.
4. Training programs for the development of advanced robotic welding operators.

Equine

The New Zealand Racing Industry generates \$1.6b in revenue each year; this includes Thorough-bred, Harness and Greyhound racing. Thorough-bred racing accounts for 68 percent of this; almost 45 percent (\$364m) coming from the Waikato. Industry leaders advise that the industry requires more qualified instructors; the Waikato region faces a shortage of qualified instructors to teach horsemanship, riding skills, horse health, and nutrition, especially for young riders. Many equine professionals in the area are self-taught, which highlights the need for formalised training and education to maintain competitiveness and stay up to date with industry trends. Byerley Park and Skill NZ have partnered to develop the New Zealand Equine Academy that is benchmarked at an international standard. This was in response to industry need for pre-employment training, ongoing professional development, improved literacy, and numeracy, and better working conditions.

Recommendations for Investment:

1. TEC fund further development of the Level 2 and 3 courses that the NZEA currently deliver, with a view to deliver a Level 4 apprenticeship in 2024.
2. NZEA currently have support for seven Youth Guarantee funded EFTs and require further support for another 40 to 50 EFTs

Other advice to TEC

Literacy and Numeracy

The Waikato region is home to many employers across a range of industries. Yet despite the region's economic growth and development, there remains a need for employers to increase their access to foundation numeracy and literacy programs for their workers. This is a theme that has been repeated previously in this advice.

Recommendations for Investment

1. Support accessibility of foundation numeracy and literacy programs in the Waikato include through more resourcing for teacher training support and increased coordination between schools and other service providers.
2. Support employers in the key role that they play in promoting accessibility to foundation numeracy and literacy programs.
 - a. provide appropriate learning opportunities and resources
 - b. seek input from employers in the design and implementation of these programs
 - c. provide employers with mentorship and coaching training to support their workers as learners.