



# **Social Services National Industry Advisory Group Hui Minutes**

**17 June 2025**

## Minutes – Social Services National Industry Advisory Group Hui (hui topa)

<b>Date, Time and Location:</b>	17 06 2025 at 10:00-12:00, Microsoft Teams, Ahumairangi
<b>Chair:</b>	Sarah Williams, National Engagement Manager, Toitū te Waiora
<b>Advisory Group Members:</b>	<p>Nathan Chong-Nee, Chief Executive, Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers</p> <p>Tuala Pesio Ah-Honi, Chief Executive, Mapu Maia</p> <p>Dominic Chilvers, Kaihautū, Council of Social Work Education Aotearoa New Zealand</p> <p>Karena Brown, Lead Strategic Researcher, E Tū</p> <p>Tanya Anaha, Chief Māori Health and Equity Officer /Pou Whakahaere, Te Whatu Ora Taranaki/ Why Ora</p> <p>Carole Tana- Tepania, Chief Executive/Kahui Member, ME Family Services/Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association</p> <p>Susana Lepoamo, Workforce Manager, Te Puna Aonui</p> <p>Edna 'Ungatea Havea, Victoria University of Wellington, Programme Director Pasifika Pathways</p> <p>Liz Gourlay, Lead Advisor Social Worker Workforce Planning, Social Workers Registration Board</p> <p>Belinda Himiona, Chief Executive, Te Pai Ora SSP</p>
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Tamar Anstice, National Engagement Project Coordinator, Toitū te Waiora
<b>Attendees:</b>	<p>Sean McKinley, Chief Executive, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Mark Ormsby, Poumatua, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Cerelia Diprose, Principal Data &amp; Insights Analyst, Toitū te Waiora</p>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<p>Ivy Harper, Pouārahi   Chief Executive, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu, Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency for the South Island</p> <p>Megan Thomassen-Clarke, Reporting &amp; Accountability Manager, National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges Inc</p>

**\*Actions for review on Page 6**

## Industry Updates- Summarised Minutes:

### Commentary:

#### Updates on Previous Actions

- **Cultural Competency Qualifications:** Update deferred to the July hui due to ongoing internal alignment work.
- **Family Violence & Sexual Violence (FV/SV) Standards:** Two skill standards and one micro-credential remain **on hold** due to staffing constraints. A full update will be provided in July.

#### VET Reforms: Transition from WDCs to Industry Skills Boards (ISBs)

The group received an update on the legislative and structural changes affecting the Toitū te Waioira.

- Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) will be disestablished and replaced with Industry Skills Boards (ISBs).
- The draft amendment bill includes provisions allowing kaimahi to transfer from WDCs to ISBs, although this is not guaranteed.
- ISBs will operate with approximately half the funding of WDCs, meaning their focus will shift toward:
  - core qualification reviews
  - skill standard maintenance
  - less new development unless mandated
- An Establishment Advisory Group (EAG) will oversee the formation of ISBs. Coverage areas, including the placement of Social & Community Services, are still under review.
- TTW confirmed that all Social Services NIAG mahi will be formally passed to ISBs to support continuity and sector voice during transition.

#### Data & Workforce Insights

The data team provided an evidence-based overview of the Social Services workforce, drawing on IDI datasets, the Census, job advertisements, provider reports, and internal TTW modelling.

#### Key Insights

- Workforce growth is occurring, with increasing demand for staff holding sub-degree qualifications.
- The sector is characterised by:
  - high levels of part-time employment
  - low rates of disability disclosure, likely due to stigma or fear of consequences
- Work is underway to disaggregate non-citizen ethnicity data to improve accuracy for migrant workforce planning.
- Job advertisement analysis shows the most in-demand skills include:
  - empathy
  - communication
  - safety and wellbeing
- Data quality remains inconsistent due to:

## Industry Updates- Summarised Minutes:

- lack of standardised reporting
  - incomplete completion records
  - limited data-sharing between TEC and NZQA
- These limitations affect long-term workforce planning and clarity around sector trends.

### Qualification Snapshot & Data Quality Issues

An overview of enrolment and completion patterns across social services-related qualifications (e.g., peer support, health and wellbeing) was presented.

#### Findings

- Completion and enrolment data remain patchy and inconsistent across providers.
- Key limitations include:
  - missing completion data
  - under-reporting of withdrawals
  - lack of clarity around qualification strands
- The sector continues to request strand-specific data, especially for Health & Wellbeing, to identify skill gaps and employer demand.
- TTW is investigating ways to improve TEC data access to produce clearer completion trends and qualification demand patterns.

### Sector Updates & Key Issues

#### Tertiary Education

- Universities are facing significant funding cuts to social sciences and humanities programmes.
- Loss of Māori and Pacific funding pools threatens equity-focused initiatives.
- Positive shifts include:
  - AUT launching a new Pacific Strategy
  - Upcoming appointment of an Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pacific)

#### Care and Support Workforce

- Pay equity agreement has expired, with no new claim available until 2027.
- Entry-level wages have fallen back to minimum wage, undermining attraction and retention.
- Budget constraints mean employers are reluctant to invest in training or upskilling.
- Sectors remain heavily reliant on migrant workers, with Level 1 migrant hiring raising exploitation concerns.

## Industry Updates- Summarised Minutes:

### **Social Work Sector**

- Review of the Social Work Registration Act is underway.
- A social work workforce strategy is being developed to address:
  - attraction
  - retention
  - career pathways
- Education and training standards are being reviewed, with interest in developing new micro-credentials.
- The annual workforce survey has launched and is described as a vital source of sector data.
- The sector continues to deal with burnout, flat career structures, and ongoing data visibility issues.

### **Family & Sexual Violence Workforce**

- Progress continues on FV/SV skill standards and a micro-credential.
- Capability frameworks have been published, alongside a national training directory.
- A long-term capacity and capability plan is underway, due by December 2026.
- Emphasis is shifting to trauma-informed practice, workforce wellbeing, and balancing prevention vs. crisis response under new government priorities.

### **Sector Contracting & Workforce Conditions**

- The Office of the Auditor General highlighted systemic problems in government contracting, leading to instability for the NGO workforce.
- Many NGOs are undergoing restructures or facing funding losses.
- The sector continues to campaign for fair funding agreements and pay equity.
- Some government agencies appear to favour lower-skilled roles to cut costs and was flagged as a serious strategic risk.

### **Professional Association Updates**

- Professional bodies remain active in advocacy around pay equity, regulatory standards, and climate action in social work.
- Challenges include burnout, ideological policy shifts, and ongoing workforce fatigue.
- The sector is prioritising professional development and international partnerships.

Industry Updates- Summarised Minutes:	
	<div><div>Summary of Key Themes</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Continuity through transition:</b> Importance of ensuring that NIAG mahi and sector knowledge transfer smoothly to ISBs.</li><li>• <b>Workforce vulnerability:</b> Recruitment, retention, burnout, pay disparities, and funding limitations persist across the social services system.</li><li>• <b>Qualification &amp; data gaps:</b> Clear need for better datasets, strand-specific insights, and routine data sharing across agencies.</li><li>• <b>FV/SV workforce capability:</b> Growing demand for specialised training and trauma-informed practice.</li><li>• <b>Migrant workforce reliance:</b> Ethical concerns around low-skilled visa pathways and inconsistent training access.</li><li>• <b>Equity at risk:</b> Māori and Pacific initiatives disproportionately impacted by tertiary funding cuts.</li><li>• <b>Need for investment:</b> Long-term workforce planning and fair funding models are essential to sector sustainability.</li></ul></div></div>

## Actions: On Hold

1.	
Reference #	20250402/01
Presenter:	Hera Williams
Commentary:	<p>Most of the group discussed the importance of cultural competency within Social Service professions and how that could be integrated into future qualifications.</p> <p>As Toitū te Waioira are currently working on creating Te Tiriti standards in CDEM and Cultural Competency/ Cultural Safety skill standards for Health and Well-being, the NIAG would like to see how these standards could be utilised for the Social Services Sector.</p>
Actions:	Hera and Mark to share draft of Cultural Competency/ Cultural Safety skill standard with the Social Services NIAG once it has been signed off by SLT.
Updated Action:	Cultural Competency Qualifications: Update deferred to next hui (July 2025).

2.	
Reference #	20250402/02
Presenters:	Hera Williams
Commentary:	<p>Toitū te Waioira are currently in the consultation phase of creating Disability qualifications.</p> <p>These qualifications will stand alone rather than be a part of the Health and Wellbeing qualification suite. This update intrigued the group, and they asked if there was any possibility of reading the disability qualification.</p>
Action:	Hera and Mark to share draft of Disability qualification with the Social Services NIAG once the Qualification Development team have updated the rest of the organisation of the qualification's contents.
Updated Action:	Sexual & Family Violence Skill Standards: Two skill standards and one micro-credential are on hold due to staffing capacity. Update deferred to next hui (July 2025).

3.	
Reference #	20250402/03
Presenters:	Hera Williams/ Susana Lepoamo
Commentary:	Susana updated us on her workforce analysis regarding the current workforce issues in the FV/SV sector. Her analysis has invaluable insights and data that could help guide and inform Toitū te Waiora's investment advice regarding the FV/SV sector.
Action:	Seek permission from Susana to share her mahi with Toitū te Waiora and the NIAG.
Updated Action:	Susana will update the NIAG when the workforce analysis has been released to the public.



## New Actions:

1.	
Reference #	20250617/01
Presenters:	Cerelia Diprose
Commentary:	<p>Cerelia noted inconsistent disability reporting (as low as 2%, as high as 25%) across sectors. Further investigation is needed into why some workers choose not to disclose. Possible reasons include stigma, fear of agency surveillance, and lack of clarity.</p>
Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note for Qualification Development team and future ISBs to discuss this with industry stakeholders when they convene advisory groups for qualification reviews (in case qualification content inclusions are needed).</li> <li>- Share what we know so far about the way in which it comes up in the data (disability disclosure by industry and occupation) if this is of interest to NIAG members.</li> </ul>
2.	
Reference #	20250617/02
Presenters:	Cerelia Diprose
Commentary:	<p>Karena requested data on the specific ethnic backgrounds of the 35% of workforce who are non-citizens, particularly useful for Pacific-focused workforce planning. This analysis can be done through the IDI.</p>
Actions:	<p>Will have have a more detailed breakdown of this data by end of October 2025, allowing time for IDI processes. Update in October 2025.</p>
3.	
Reference #	20250617/03
Presenters:	Cerelia Diprose

**3.**

Commentary:	Nathan requested a breakdown of data specific to social work roles. Cerelia confirmed occupation-specific filtering is possible and will provide this upon request.
Actions:	Share what we already have by end of June 2025, allowing time to tweak by occupation so that a tighter industry snapshot can be produced.

**4.**

Reference #	20250617/04
Presenters:	Belinda Himiona
Commentary:	Belinda noted the next funding round for the Workforce Futures Fund opens in August. The fund supports workforce training initiatives across sectors, but has previously excluded some registered professions. Members are encouraged to apply or circulate the opportunity.
Actions:	Share Workforce Futures Fund info ahead of August round of funding to be released to the sector.