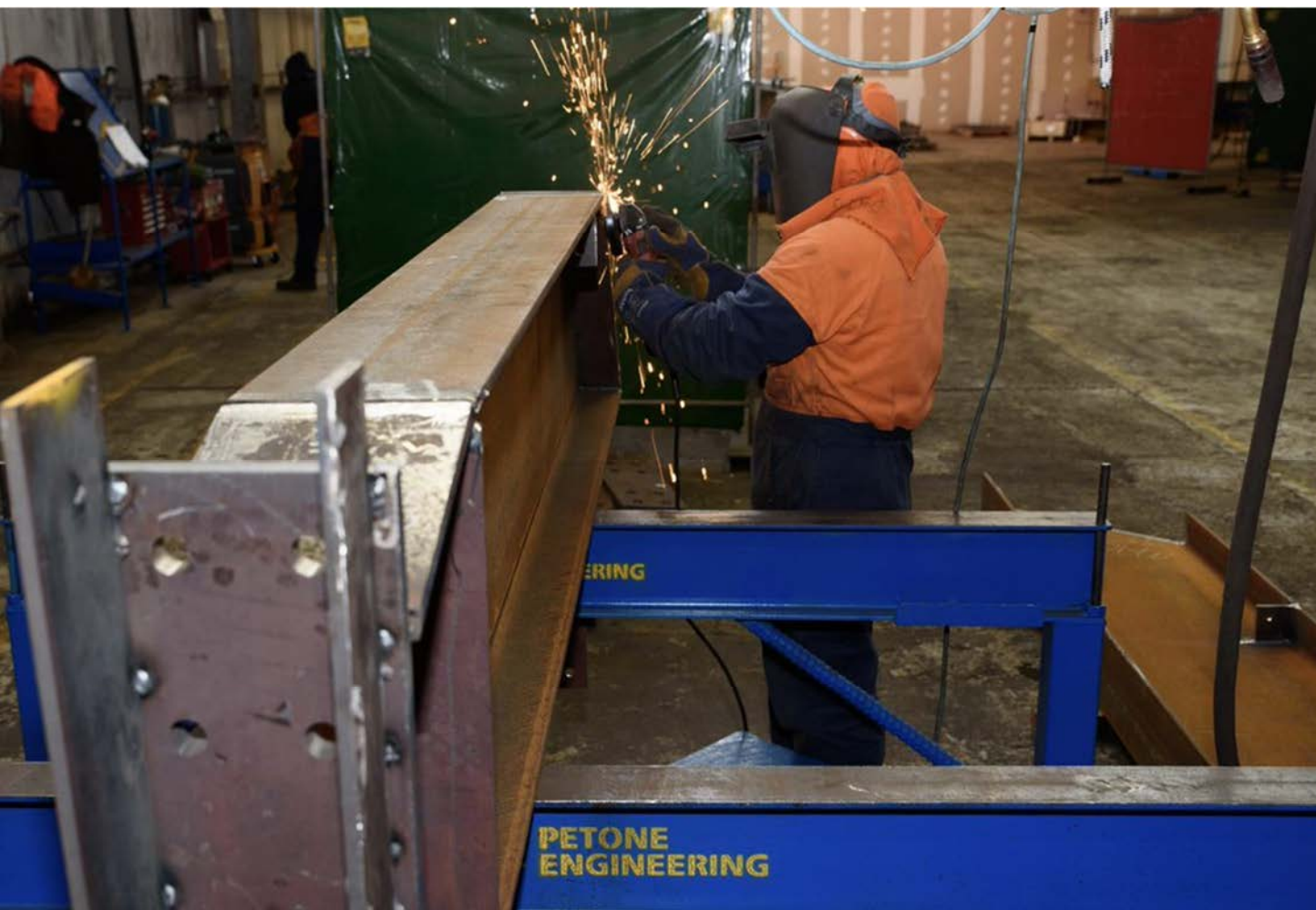




Summary of feedback on the Draft Wellington Regional Workforce Plan

May 2022



The Context

In April 2022 the Wellington Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) developed a draft Regional Workforce Plan which proposed actions and activities with regional impact that could be achieved through leadership, influence, coordination and collaboration. We then sought feedback on the draft plan, in particular:

- 🚧 If we had got the region's challenges right.
- 🚧 If we had done enough to support efforts to improve employment outcomes for Māori and other priority communities.
- 🚧 If our proposed actions will help address the challenges.
- 🚧 Who would be interested in helping to implement actions/activities.

How we consulted

We ran seven online hui with approximately 35 attendees; there were individual hui focussed on disabled people's community organisations, iwi and Māori, training providers, and unions. We also heard from the Wairarapa Skills Leadership Group and other stakeholders through RSLG Co-chairs and members.

We received 13 written submissions from a range of stakeholders including local councils, NGOs, chambers of commerce and training providers.

What we heard

- There was widespread general support for the plan, challenges identified and focus areas.
- The plan is readable and accessible and well laid out, but long.
- Agreement that this a great opportunity for connection across a complex area.
- Support for the work of supporting/creating inclusive workplaces.
- Agreement we had the right priority communities and sectors (we gave assurance that food production is included under the manufacturing sector).
- There were many offers to work with us on activities and actions.

Key changes suggested

Māori and Iwi in the plan

While Iwi and Māori are discussed throughout the plan, the plan should be strengthened to reflect the unique position of Māori in our region, and the significance of te Tiriti o Waitangi; Māori are not just another priority group. There should also be a stronger focus on the opportunities and strengths in the Māori economy.

It is also important to note that Māori knowledge and skills, including in te Reo Māori and knowledge of te Ao Māori are in high demand in the region.

In response to this we added a new section to the plan, incorporating this feedback.

The plan's context

The plan should be clearer on the regional context, and talk more about climate change, COVID-19, and other current factors. It should also say more about the plan's place in the Reform of Vocational Education, in particular, the relationship to Workforce Development Councils and Te Pūkenga, and signal the importance of the RSLG connecting with transitional ITOs.

In response to this we revised and strengthened wording in the plan related to all of the topics above.

Relationship to other plans

There should be more information about how the plan will intersect with plans from other regions - we need to explore national solutions for common themes and challenges where common challenges exist.

In response to this we strengthened wording around the connection between other plans and ours.

Addition of the primary sector as a priority

We were told that this sector, while not employing large numbers across the whole region, is very important to Wairarapa in terms of filled jobs and GDP, and to a lesser extent, the same is true for Kāpiti. The sector also provides an economic base that supports many other businesses, as well as a cultural and social foundation for the rural community. Furthermore, the primary industry is the biggest contributor to the Māori economy.

In response to this we added Primary as a priority sector to the plan.

Improving employment outcomes for Māori and other priority communities: summary of feedback

- We heard about the importance of using Māori datasets when available.
- We should look to influence opportunities that reorient sectors towards a better, stronger partnership approach with iwi Māori.
- As we have Central Government in our region, how do we influence Māori Leadership, Māori Capacity, inclusion of Mātauranga Māori as a recognised body of knowledge across the sector?
- Expertise in Mātauranga Māori and te Ao Māori must be remunerated and, in many cases, strategies that promote these are capability sets for leadership roles in central and local government for roles other than Māori focused roles.
- It is important to value, promote and maximise the existing Māori businesses across the region that are working to build capability with mainstream organisations.

Our actions: Overall comments on implementing the plan

- The connection element is all-important, and a big challenge is how to connect, particularly how to reach small to medium enterprises.
- More information is needed on exactly how the plan will be funded and implemented, including the key partners and responsibilities.
- There should be some prioritisation of the actions to identify those which might have the greatest impact for the employers and the workforce in our region.
- There should be some examples of effective actions or activities around the action. (*We have added these in the plan*)
- Local Government does not always have the resources, both people and dollars, to implement many of the actions required. Local coordination/facilitation and delivery are key roles, but it costs!

Individual actions: summary of feedback and comments

On the creation of a youth advisory group, we should consider the opportunity to establish a youth caucus that covers both RSLG and the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee activities (for both the Wellington Regional Growth Framework and regional economic development activities.)

On making information and support available to employers:

- There should be more employer and union connection which could come through WDCs and industry training plans, and there should be better leverage of regional business networks.
- Most councils would willingly facilitate delivery of employer workshops and programmes if they were developed. Porirua City Council would like to become involved in this work.
- We need to explore models for reaching SMEs; employers will be asked to do more under the RoVE changes, and they need support.
- Employer information could be aligned with other processes such as fair pay agreements and pay equity, and/or through peak bodies.
- There is work to be done with employers to convince them that diversity goes beyond gender/race/etc and means that they should be hiring people without degrees, people with non-university qualifications, and those with micro-credentials.
- It's really important to get employers working together as a sector and not just as individual employers.
- Workbridge's Industry Partnership program, Mahia Kotahi, can play a crucial supporting role by partnering with the Wellington RSLG on a sector-wide approach in the key focus industries of: Construction, Infrastructure, Digital and Health.

On encouraging social procurement

- The disability sector emphasised that social procurement has not yet been working for disabled people and much more could be done, highlighting good overseas examples. The RSLG should encourage both local and central Government to adopt a working best practice model, that is best suited to the New Zealand environment.
- There is an opportunity to include evidence of training and development as a social procurement criteria.
- Hutt City Council are working in this space and keen to potentially partner.

On building awareness of careers in our region

- Good career advice is crucial. Career advisors tend to be spread too thinly, poorly funded, or only available to those who seek them out. Connections need to be improved with critical industries.
- Hutt City Council said they would look to do this in collaboration with the Hutt Valley Chamber and Upper Hutt City Council with initiatives such as job expo's and would continue its STEM focused initiatives.

On promoting training and skills development in the region

- We should think beyond the traditional trades, and encourage traineeships in more roles and sectors, and connect people through the training system.
- It is crucial to remember older workers and the opportunities for upskilling and progression. Lifelong learning is key.
- Trades academies are a good example of learning pathways. They balance school and trades work and provide support on into the workplace. A safe learning environment is key.
- There is a need for a community of practice approach where multiple employers and education providers collaborate on marketing to attract learners and ensuring the quality of students being placed into industry.
- It is important to prepare the workforce for the transition to a more automated future workplace.
- We need to elevate te Reo Māori and learning through the lens of Māori, and systems need to recognise this as part of the body of Mātauranga Māori.
- We should promote and support micro credentials
- There should also be consideration of Trade Union Education and Trade Union Education in schools.

On seeking support for programmes that have good outcomes for our priority communities

- We must not reinvent the wheel or duplicate what is already being done. We should find out what initiatives are working well already and support these. An essential role for the RSLG is to advocate and encourage consultation between agencies and organisations.
- It is important to consider self-determination in these actions. Disabled people need to lead actions that impact on their communities.
- Low educational attainment is a significant barrier for disabled people including mid-career or older people, as is low digital literacy for some.
- There are barriers for job seeker support for disabled people such as red tape flexibility and having to reapply regularly for funding for workplace support.
- Health and well-being of job seekers is a big challenge., This includes mental health. Job seekers and young people need ongoing support wrap around services and pastoral care.
- A good programme to lift employment outcomes for disabled people is Workbridge's Disability Confident Employer program 'Just Say Yes'. This could be adopted across the region. Another good programme is the Hutt City Council's Pathways to Employment for disabled people.

On engaging with public service as a regional employer for better outcomes for our priority communities

- Central government is not always easy to engage with and doesn't necessarily 'walk the walk' with its employment practices.
- The Wellington Regional Leadership Committee (WRLC) is exploring iwi capacity and capability and there may be opportunities to work together on this RSLG action. This relates to the activity on enabling career progression of Māori and Pacific staff.

On making data and information available to assist decision-making

- The provision of information platforms that businesses and communities can easily access, and use are critical.
- The WRLC has a project to set up a regional housing dashboard and there is also a Transport Analytics Unit in the Wellington region. We should look at how we could co-ordinate/join these up.

What else we heard

We received feedback that updated our data or pointed to better sources of data. We have updated the plan accordingly. We also made some minor word changes and clarified definitions.

We thank everyone for their feedback. We will continue to provide updates as we publish and begin to implement the plan. You can [Sign up online](#) to receive these.

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