



# CANTERBURY REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN UPDATE

July 2023

**Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

 Canterbury  
**REGIONAL SKILLS  
LEADERSHIP GROUPS.**

**Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government



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## MIHI

# CO-CHAIR MIHI - 2023 REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN UPDATE

Kei aku nui, kei aku rahi, tēnā koutou katoa i runga i ngā āhuatanga o te wā!

I runga anō i te mana o te RSLG, nō māua hoki te whiwhi ki te tuku atu i tenei Te Akunga Houhare Mahere ā-Rohe ki Waitaha.

Ko tā mātou kaupapa, he whakahihiko i ngā kōrero ā-rohe, me pēhea tā tātou o Waitaha nei tautoko, whakawhanake hoki i tō tātou akunga houhare – i naia tonu nei, ki tua hoki.

He mahere tēnei mā te rohe, nā te rohe tonu.

Tēnā koutou katoa.



**On behalf of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG), we are pleased to introduce the 2023 update of the Canterbury Regional Workforce Plan (RWP).**

This document compliments, and should be read alongside, the inaugural Regional Workforce Plan that was released in 2022. It builds off the work the region has undertaken since the launch of that plan and it continues to be guided by our aspirations for Canterbury where:

- We have a workforce that has the right skills and capability to support Canterbury's current and future labour market demands.
- Everyone has equitable access to the support needed to grow and navigate within the labour market in all stages of a working life.
- All of our workplaces are worker-friendly, safe, and inclusive, so that both employees and employers can thrive.

This vision for the region puts people at the centre of everything we do as an RSLG. The 2023 update outlines the progress we have made as a region, whilst introducing new spotlight areas and actions we see as a priority.

We will continue to use this plan to bring change through influence, leadership, collaboration and coordination. We will provide leadership in the region by facilitating hui, and enabling and enhancing collaboration across industry, education providers and other stakeholders to progress our actions.

We aim to work alongside and strengthen the mahi already underway in our communities. We are continually looking for partners to work with as we seek to use every tool in our toolbox to ensure Canterbury's labour market environment can progress towards our aspirations and enable all of us to thrive.

The process of developing this plan has again been one of partnership and collaboration. We are very grateful to our colleagues from iwi, industry, the education and training sector, membership bodies, trade unions, community and other enterprises who have participated in its development.

We look forward to continuing to partner with our national and regional stakeholders to enact change that delivers and supports better ways of meeting current and future skills and workforce needs for all of Canterbury.

**Liz Brown**  
Ngāi Tahu/ Iwi Co-Chair

**Karena Brown**  
Co-Chair

# TE MATAWHĀNUI MŌ TE AKUNGA HOUHARE

## OUR VISION AND WORKFORCE ASPIRATIONS

This document and the actions it contains are guided by both the vision and aspirations developed by the Regional Skills Leadership Group in the inaugural 2022 Regional Workforce Plan.

### Te Wawata | The Vision:

Canterbury has a connected, coordinated labour market where everyone is enabled to thrive.

**Kua tūhono, kua reretahi hoki te māketē hunga mahi o tō tatou rohe, kia puāwai ai tatou katoa.**

### Workforce Aspirations

**Aspiration One:** The workforce has the right skills and capability to support Canterbury's current and future labour market demands.

**Waitaha pūkenga rau, pūkenga manomano.**

This aspiration focuses on capability uplift within the labour market, and the relationship between labour market needs and the education and training sector. It is about ensuring our region is prepared for future labour demand, and that key players within the system are aligned and connected.

**Aspiration Two:** There is equitable access to the support needed to grow and navigate within the labour market in all stages of a working life.

**Waitaha tangata rau, tangata manomano.**

This aspiration is about positive change for people within the workforce and those looking to enter it. It is about our region supporting people to thrive in the labour market, having equal visibility of all the career options available, and being able to easily access the support needed to navigate the labour market throughout their working lives.

**Aspiration Three:** All workplaces are worker-friendly, safe, and inclusive, and support both employees and employers to thrive.

**Waitaha pākihi haumako.**

This aspiration is about creating better work environments and building Canterbury's reputation as a region where people love to work. It seeks to create an environment where labour market challenges are reduced as the region attracts and retains a strong, engaged and diverse workforce.



In 2022 655,000 people, or 12.8 % of New Zealand's population, lived in Canterbury. Christchurch is the region's principal and most populous centre, and the country's second largest urban area. The region grew 0.7% in 2022 which was above the national average of 0.2%. The Canterbury RSLG region includes 11 different sub-regions: Kaikōura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Christchurch City, Selwyn, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate, Waitaki and the Chatham Islands.



# TE TIROHANGA Ā-ROHE REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Canterbury Gross Domestic Profit (GDP) in 2022 was \$44,220 million which makes up 12.4% of the national total.

## EMPLOYMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

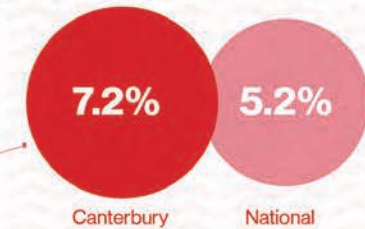


Within the region, Canterbury has 348,920 filled jobs which is equal to a 13% share of the employment in New Zealand. Of this number, 14.6% or 50,835, were self-employed.



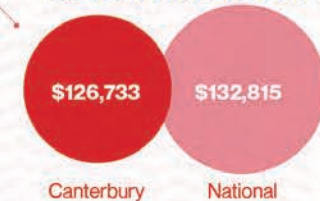
The sectors contributing the most to Canterbury's employment numbers in 2022 (by ANZSIC 1 digit code) were Construction (11.3%), Health Care and Social Assistance (11%), Manufacturing (10.6%) and Retail Trade (9.4%). Canterbury also has a strong Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry (5.9%) with the sub-regions outside of Christchurch City dominating the employment in this sector.

## ECONOMIC GDP GROWTH



Economic GDP growth in the region continues to be strong with an increase of 7.2% tracking ahead of a national average of 5.2%.

## CANTERBURY GDP



Canterbury GDP per filled job in 2022 was \$126,733 which is 4.6% below the national average of \$132,815.



House values remain significantly more affordable compared to the New Zealand average. This means that Canterbury is able to have a mortgage proportion of income of 40.5% compared to the national average of 49.2%.

The biggest contributors to economic growth in Canterbury over the last 10 years by sector include: Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Construction; Retail Trade; and Health Care and Social Assistance.

## Forecast Workforce Demand Pressures

The table below is a broad indicator of how workforce demand is forecasted to be distributed across Canterbury's industries in the future. It takes a forecasted approach, looking at years 2025 to 2028, and takes into account anticipated job openings created through growth, and through people leaving the workforce (e.g. retirement).

It is important to acknowledge the diversity across Canterbury's sub-regions. Sub-regional industry structures vary, especially when there is an urban and rural distinction. Therefore, it is important to consider sub-regional workforce demand needs alongside the Canterbury region as a whole.

Industry - ANZSIC Level 1	Canterbury Region	Ashburton District	Christchurch City	Hurunui District	Kaikōura District	Mackenzie District	Selwyn District	Timaru District	Waimakariri District	Waimate District
Manufacturing	+	+		+			+	+	+	+
Education and Training	+		+		+		+			
Healthcare and Social Assistance			+					+		
Construction	+	+	+					+	+	+
Retail Trade					+				+	
Professional, Scientific and Technical			+							
Accommodation and Food Services				+	+	+	+			
Administrative and Support Services			+			+				
Transport, Postal and Warehousing			+		+			+		
Public Administration and Safety							+			
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing		+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Other Services										
Wholesale Trade		+								
Rental, Hiring, and Real Estate Services				+						
Arts and Recreation Services					+	+				
Financial and Insurance Services										
Electricity, Gas, Water, and Waste services										
Info Media and Telecommunications										
Mining										

**Key**

Sector share of all forecasted new job openings within the region:

- Significant.** 10% or more of the region's forecasted job openings are in this sector
- Very high.** 7-10% of the region's forecasted job openings are in this sector
- High.** 5-7% or more of the region's forecasted job openings are in this sector

**+** **Regional demand is higher than national demand**

Sectors with strong growth but a low share of the region's total job openings:

- 7% or more of total jobs in the sector are forecasted to be job openings.

## NGĀ ĀHUA APŪ KI WAITAHA

# CANTERBURY LABOUR MARKET CONDITIONS

The Canterbury Labour market in 2023 is tight and there are pressures on both the demand and supply of labour and skills. We have near record percentages of working age people employed, but there are groups who could still be experiencing better outcomes in the labour market. We also have an ageing population which will only continue to have an impact on worker and skills shortages – a challenge experienced globally.

Labour shortages are intense in all OECD countries, but New Zealand stands out for the intensity of our shortages. This issue will lead to greater competition for global talent.

Considering this highly competitive labour market environment, it is important that Canterbury looks at all levers available to meet the expected challenges. While the 2022 RWP and 2023 update focus on specific 'spotlight' sectors and demographics and training, education and innovation as a means to achieve this, it is crucial for immigration settings to work in conjunction with these efforts.

### Immigration settings

We consider immigration settings as a key issue currently influencing the Canterbury labour market. COVID-19 and the impact of changing immigration settings has highlighted the region's requirement for skilled migrants to meet labour demands, and increased the vulnerabilities of many industries when border settings constrain this. We continue to discuss this issue regularly, having heard these concerns consistently from across the region.

Access to overseas talent has been a key part of Canterbury's success over the last decade, with 50,000 visas in the 2010s helping the region meet immediate business needs. With recent changes to the skilled migrant visa system, there are concerns that new pay-rate-based immigration settings might disadvantage areas like Canterbury that have a lower median wage than the overall national average.

### A responsive system

The Canterbury RSLG supports having an immigration system that takes a needs-based approach where training and migration are part of the same conversation. Targeted and regionally informed immigration can promote higher productivity in regional and rural areas of New Zealand and support growth, economic performance and resilience in those areas.

In Canterbury, immigration plays a critical role in filling skills shortages. The current labour constraints have demonstrated the importance of having access to a migrant workforce. The limitations have contributed to widespread labour shortages causing burnout, mental health concerns, overall workforce retention issues and adverse economic performance outcomes in some areas. There has been loss of productivity because work has physically been unable to be completed, and more time is being spent trying to recruit and onboard new staff in a very challenging environment.

We believe there is a potential role for all RSLG's across New Zealand to provide strategic regional advice that Immigration

New Zealand would have to consider when making decisions. This vehicle would help the system be more responsive to the different and unique labour market needs across the motu. Critical to the successful implementation of this structured advice is the knowledge that this will be used. Mechanisms need to be created to ensure that the advice is taken into consideration when Immigration New Zealand are making decisions.

### Coordination and Alignment

Regional Skills Leadership Groups are also supported by the Regional Public Service Commissioner (RPSC) in the resolution, and if necessary, escalation, of system barriers through their government mandate to convene public service agencies. The role of the RPSC is to strengthen regional system leadership by working to coordinate and align central government decision makers. They are focused on the planning and delivery of wellbeing outcomes in the region across social, economic, skills and workforce, and environmental sectors. The RPSC also works with local government, iwi, Māori organisations, NGOs and regional stakeholders when system barriers are identified through RSLG to support the vision for Canterbury becoming a connected, coordinated labour market where everyone is enabled to thrive.

We will continue to work with all our partners in this space to provide clear information and insights to enable businesses to grow, develop and create a more productive and resilient Canterbury labour market.



## HE TIROHANGA WHAKAMURI KI 2022

# LOOKING BACK AT THE 2022 REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN

The 2022 Canterbury Regional Workforce Plan put the spotlight on four important areas of our labour market:

1. Rangatahi (demographic group)
2. Healthcare and Social Assistance (mental health focus)
3. Digital Technology
4. Manufacturing

The plan identified the key issues currently facing these four areas and included several actions to contribute to the realisation of our regional labour market aspirations.

Alongside actions for these four areas, we identified region-wide cross-cutting issues and actions that were common across a range of sectors and demographics in the region.

We provide six-monthly updates on progress against our actions on the Canterbury RSLG website.

### Key Activity and Highlights

Some significant highlights from the last 12 months have included:

#### Pathways Leadership Breakfast

In March 2023 we partnered with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, Connected.govt.nz and ChristchurchNZ to organise and host a Pathways Leadership Breakfast at the Christchurch Town Hall. The event brought together leaders from both schools and

industry to identify and discuss opportunities on how to better connect. The event had several speakers and presentations on topics including; National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) pilot programmes in the region, local business engagement with schools, and a senior secondary school student's own story about engaging with career support systems and advice.

This event had strong links to our 2022 actions around training pathways and career development support and it also helped initiate better connections between schools and businesses within the region. Due to the success of this breakfast, it is anticipated that similar events will be held in other parts of Canterbury in the future.



Pathways Leadership Breakfast at the Christchurch Town Hall

#### Techweek 2023 Workshop

We partnered with Canterbury Tech to deliver a Techweek 2023 event in May 2023. The event brought together tech industry, training providers and organisations with an interest in this space and facilitated regional workforce discussion that helped support training providers gain insights into the specific needs of tech sector employers. The event also provided a platform to discuss the challenges and opportunities faced by training providers and gain a shared understanding of the current and future tech workforce requirements.

This event was linked to a number of our 2022 actions and in particular, served to enable greater engagement between employers and training providers, aiding their ability to influence future training provision.



Techweek 2023

## Collaboration with Hanga-Aro-Rau and a Local Manufacturing Company

We have been working with Workforce Development Council, Hanga-Aro-Rau, and a local manufacturing company on the development of an upskilling programme in the resource management sector. This was in response to our manufacturing sector workshops held during our engagement for the 2022 RWP and seeks to help provide different ways people could enter and advance within the industry.

If it is successful, the modules will be used to adapt existing industry qualifications and/or create new ones for employees, which could then be shared as a new learning pathway across the sector.

## Regional Immigration Connections

We continue to engage with key parties to develop a regional framework for informing and influencing immigration policy settings for the benefit of Canterbury's labour market and economic performance.

As part of this work we have met with Immigration NZ (INZ) policy staff to better understand current migration settings and the work that is underway; contributed to work on the Government Policy Statement on immigration; worked with ChristchurchNZ on key messaging to central government; and, partnered with the Canterbury Mayoral Forum to advocate for settings that enable Canterbury to create a more productive and resilient economy.

Other key areas of activity against our actions from the last 12 months, grouped by aspiration, include:

### **Aspiration One - The workforce has the right skills and capability to support Canterbury's current and future labour market demands. The RSLG:**

- Worked with local partners to determine a regional position to inform migration decisions made at central government level.
- Established strong and productive connections with Workforce Development Councils, Industry Transformation Plans, Tertiary Education Commission and Te Pūkenga.
- Engaged with industry and industry bodies on attraction initiatives that the RSLG can support.
- Engaged with industry on programmes currently underway seeking to change sector perceptions to encourage more people into their industries.
- Reviewed NCEA data to identify and understand issues on achievement by sub-region, gender, ethnicity and other relevant factors.
- Produced quarterly Local Insights Reports (LIRs), providing labour market insights from across the region. A new communications platform is being utilised to widely share LIRs in an accessible way.

### **Aspiration Two - There is equitable access to the support needed to grow and navigate within the labour market in all stages of a working life. The RSLG:**

- Undertook development work on an upskilling pilot programme with local businesses.
- Worked regionally to understand training needs and how they are different by sub-region etc.
- Engaged with Hanga Aro Rau to explore the different training pathways available and how suitable they are.
- Explored creation of an industry specific advisory group to be

a conduit for training providers to get sector input for future training provision.

- Had discussions with local schools on National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) Objective 4 (Future of learning and work) and its implementation.
- Engaged with key stakeholders and partners to understand the work underway to better support rangatahi Māori who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and connect them with support services (Te Whai Mahi Māori).
- Engaged with industry on programmes currently underway seeking to change sector perceptions to encourage more people into their industries.

### **Aspiration Three - All workplaces are worker-friendly, safe, and inclusive, and support both employees and employers to thrive. The RSLG:**

- Undertook research on the different diversity programmes and opportunities available in Canterbury.
- Engaged with Diversity Works and had them present at an RSLG hui, enhancing our understanding of how we can best work with them and access national and local resources.
- Engaged with the living wage accreditation group on what makes a good employer.
- Researched what is available locally and nationally to showcase good workplace practices with particular interest in evidence-based models.
- Organised and facilitated a rangatahi focus group to better understand what issues are a priority for them.
- Reached out to the manufacturing sector regarding some programs currently underway - in particular for women, Māori and Pacific peoples.

For a comprehensive overview of our progress, visit: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/employment-and-skills/regional-skills-leadership-groups/canterbury/>

# Ō MĀTOU ARONGA MATUA 2023

## OUR 2023 SPOTLIGHT AREAS

This Regional Workforce Plan Update 2023 shines a spotlight on two additional labour market areas that are important to the Canterbury region: Primary Sector and Disabled People.

Here is why we chose these spotlight areas:

### Primary Sector:

A vital part of Canterbury's economy and labour market and at the heart of many of the sub-regions. The sector is a crucial part of the food and fibre supply chain and a key driver of economic activity that supplies a number of downstream businesses.

### Disabled People:

Disabled people regionally and nationally face significant barriers to labour market entry and participation and as a result, continue to experience ongoing adverse labour market outcomes.

These spotlights have been analysed and tested with our stakeholders and partners. This has enabled us to identify actions that will help resolve the fundamental challenges in these areas as well as take the region another step closer towards achieving our workforce aspirations.

Alongside these new spotlights, we continue to work on supporting improvements in the four areas we highlighted in the 2022 Regional Workforce Plan.

### Rangatahi:

The future of Canterbury and supporting them to unlock and achieve their full potential will have positive and long-lasting effects for the region.

### Digital Technologies:

Vital for our future economy and productivity in the region. The sector is high value and a key enabler for numerous other sectors.

### Manufacturing Sector:

Keeps food on the table and supplies us with the goods we use in our everyday lives. The manufacturing sector can help us meet the needs of today whilst innovating for the future.

### Health Care and Social Assistance Sector:

Fundamental to the health and wellbeing of the people of Canterbury. Critical to local communities and the quality of life the people of Canterbury experience.



# RĀNGAI MĀTĀMUA KI WAITAHA

## PRIMARY SECTOR

### Horopaki / Situation

The Primary Sector is a vital part of Canterbury's economy and labour market and is at the economic and cultural heart of many of the region's communities. The sector provides the foundation of food and fibre production and supply, and its strength is a key driver of economic activity for many downstream sectors and businesses. The region has a national and international reputation for producing world class quality food and fibre products, which has been hard won and is a source of pride.





# PRIMARY SECTOR

In 2022 the Primary Sector contributed \$3,155 million to the region's GDP, making up 7.1% of the total GDP for Canterbury.



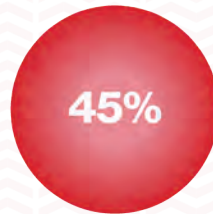
**14%**

The Primary Sector is a major employer with 20,500 filled jobs and accounts for 14% of the sector nationwide in 2022.

Of this number there is a high self-employment rate of 31.3% which is just over double the Canterbury average.



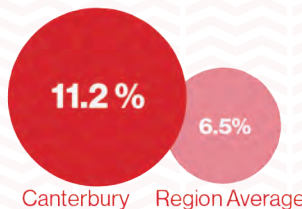
Within the sector, the top five occupations make up 45% of jobs and include; Dairy Cattle Farmer, Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Worker, Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmer, Dairy Cattle Farm Worker, and Sheep Farmer.



## Top 5 occupations

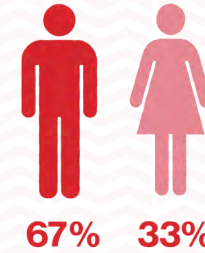
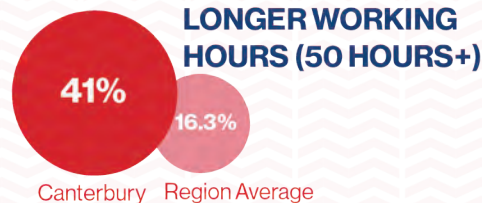


## PROPORTION OF OLDER WORKERS (65+)



The Primary Sector has some distinct differences to the average Canterbury workforce in a number of areas. It has a higher proportion of older workers with 11.2% of workers being 65+ compared to a region average of 6.5% (as at 2018).

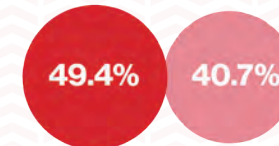
We also know that this workforce is significantly more likely to work longer hours than average. In 2018, 41% of this workforce reported working 50 hours or more per week compared to 16.3% for the region as a whole.



## GENDER

Employees within the sector are predominantly male – around 67% of the workforce, a proportion that has remained consistent over the last 20 years.

## QUALIFICATIONS



Canterbury Region Average

The sector also has a relatively high number of workers (49.4%) with no formal post-secondary school qualification, compared to a regional average of 40.7%.



The Primary sector workforce is a significant sector for migrant workers who help diversify the region's population and contribute new skills and methodologies to the economy. We know that in early 2023 the two highest occupations by number of migrants in Canterbury was Dairy Cattle Farmer and Dairy Cattle Farm Worker. The importance of this migrant labour is further seen in statistics that show that 22% of Primary Sector employees in the region are on work visas compared to a national average in the sector of 17.5%.

## Ngā Taero | Complications

Since the Canterbury RSLG was formed, we have consistently heard from the sector and regional leaders about the challenges the Primary Sector is experiencing.

The most consistent and widespread challenge we have heard is the sectors difficulty in attracting and retaining an appropriately skilled workforce to meet business needs. Contributing to this is some negative perceptions of the sector, which may be discouraging new workers from entering. Other issues highlighted include: environmental concerns, farming cost-structures, the isolation of working in rural areas, housing shortages, mobility challenges, and the view that the sector does not readily adopt technology or support workers in having a good work-life balance.

From an employer's perspective, we have heard about the significant impact migration settings, combined with an older retiring workforce, are having on an already tight labour market. There are significant shortages across all areas of the sector, both for the required number of staff, and in specific skill areas. These challenges are exacerbated by competition for labour in other sectors, and the limited pool of short-term/seasonal migrant labour.

An aging workforce poses a key challenge for businesses in the sector, creating an urgent need to develop workforce succession plans to ensure new workers enter the sector at the right time, with the right skills, to fill the gap left by retiring workers.

We have also heard of the impact of ongoing veterinarian shortages as this generates problems for the entire farming industry, heightening the risk of animal welfare incidents and potential risk to the ongoing productivity of the sector.

From an employee perspective, we have heard that there are issues around lack of understanding of career

progression within the sector, and the different pathways workers can take to upskill. A compounding issue is sourcing suitable accommodation for workers in some parts of the region.

These challenges attract much attention and distract from an industry which is well positioned for the future. Food will always be in demand, and while there are current tensions, participants in the industry emphasise the satisfaction of a meaningful career growing quality food for a hungry world.

From a sector-wide perspective, we have heard concerns around resilience and the current overall strain on the sector. Alongside the pandemic, there have been several economic and natural events such as recent flooding that have tested the sector's ability to recover and adapt. This has coincided with the sector's transition towards environmental best practices, putting further stretch on operations.

## Ngā Take | Issue Summary

- Difficulties in attracting and retaining a suitable skilled workforce to meet sector demand.
- Impact of negative perceptions of the sector and difficulties in attracting young people.
- Impact of immigration settings on the hiring environment.
- An ageing and retiring workforce, and the need for succession planning to manage impact.
- Veterinarian shortage and the bottleneck this can cause in the sector.
- Need for better awareness of career progression and opportunities within the sector.
- Importance of a resilient sector, and the strain already felt.
- Impact and opportunities of changing environmental practices and regulations.

## Ngā Mahi | Actions

The actions will contribute towards improved labour market outcomes for the Primary Sector. In particular, the actions below can help address some of the key issues the sector faces (see action table on page 19 for full details):

1. Future of the workforce
2. Sector perceptions
3. Career development support
4. Workplace diversity
5. Best practice workplaces

# TĀNGATA WHAIKAHA DISABLED PEOPLE

The most recent Statistics NZ Disability Survey reports that 24 percent of the total New Zealand population are disabled, equating to approximately 1.2 million people.

## Horopaki / Situation

Disabled people are more likely to face significant barriers to entry and participation in employment and also experience ongoing adverse labour market outcomes. We want to work with disabled people so they have a platform to confidently share their ideas, aspirations and stories, so we can better shape and influence labour market structures and work environments to support them.

To do this, we need to work closely with employers, disabled people, government agencies, training providers, partners and stakeholders, to understand the opportunities for better collaboration and how we can create mutually beneficial opportunities and pathways.





TĀNGATA WHAIKAHA  
**DISABLED PEOPLE**

Labour market statistics from Stats NZ Labour Market Statistics (Disability) Survey: June 2022 make it clear that the adverse outcomes disabled people face are significant and prevalent across many key metrics. We know that:



**42%** **DISABLED PEOPLE EXPERIENCE LOWER EMPLOYMENT**

42% of working age disabled people were employed vs 80% of non-disabled people.



**\$662** **DISABLED PEOPLE HAVE LOWER INCOME**

In the June 2022 quarter disabled people aged 15-64 had a mean income of \$662 per week compared with \$1,125 for non-disabled people.

**DISABLED PEOPLE FACE HIGHER LIVING COST**

These costs could include medicine, physiotherapy, or transport, alongside additional costs such as assistive computer software or technology.



**26%** **DISABLED PEOPLE WORK FEWER HOURS**

26% of employed disabled people worked part-time compared with 17% of non-disabled people.



**Definition of disabled**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines disabled people as “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

These metrics are influenced by the barriers disabled people face in the labour market and we want to work to remove and mitigate these and bring meaningful change. Unlocking the potential of disabled people would benefit businesses and employers, whilst also helping disabled people live more connected and engaged lives where their skills and experiences are utilised and valued.



## Ngā Taero | Complications

The labour market that disabled people need to navigate is not an even playing field, with significant and widespread barriers that contribute to the adverse labour market outcomes they experience.

A significant barrier is the prevalence of negative employer perceptions around hiring disabled people. Because of their limited exposure and experiences working with disabled people, employers may struggle to understand what is involved in hiring a disabled person. There are often misconceptions around the financial cost of hiring a disabled person, workplace adjustments, perceived productivity, and the skills that they can bring to an organisation. This lack of understanding can have adverse effects both for employers, who miss out on the advantages and benefits of hiring disabled people, and disabled people who miss out on workforce opportunities.

There are several programmes that raise awareness with employers on ways of removing employment barriers for disabled people, but these do not have the reach or visibility that they need. For some, the gap between negative employer perceptions and the reality in employing disabled people can often lead to disabled people with the requisite skills, training and qualifications missing out on roles they would otherwise get.

Our key aim is to promote the benefits and examples of disabled people in the workplace. We know the value of successful programmes like the Ministry of Social Development's 2010 - 2015 'Think Differently' campaign, and 'Works For Me' video are impactful positive examples of labour market success stories, but the reach of these stories needs to be wider.

We also seek to address barriers such as inaccessible workplaces, lack of awareness of in-work support, fear of disclosure of disability, raised mainstream costs of employment (eg transport), and the impact of digital inequity.

## Ngā Take | Issue Summary

- Disabled people have lower rates of employment and work fewer hours.
- Disabled people have lower incomes while facing higher living costs.
- Some employers have misguided perceptions about hiring a disabled person.
- Success stories and initiatives on hiring disabled people lack visibility.
- There are additional barriers disabled people face in the labour market.

## Ngā Mahi | Actions

Our actions will contribute towards improved labour market outcomes for disabled people. A focus on the actions below will help address some of the issues this group face (see action table on page 19 for full details):

1. Sector perceptions
2. Career development support
3. Workplace diversity
4. Best practise workplaces
5. Digital technology workforce diversity - Neurodivergence

# TOHUTOHU A TE AMORANGI MĀTAURANGA MATUA

## TERTIARY EDUCATION

### COMMISSION ADVICE

We have a mandate to provide advice that reflects our region's unique perspective on how tertiary education can meet future skills and workforce needs. This advice is based on local intelligence and the results of regional coordination. The advice produced is then used as part of the investment decision making process the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) undertakes.

In April 2023, we provided advice to the TEC to inform future investment decisions. This advice touched on the work underway with our regional partners to ensure a joined-up approach to training, and noted engagement with a range of Workforce Development Councils (Waihanga Ara Rau, Toi Mai, Toitū te Waiora, Hanga-Aro-Rau and Muka Tangata) to share information and look at ways of better working together. The advice included some key themes from our engagement and noted high level items covering:

- The need for an integrated South Island network approach to education provision acknowledging the interconnectedness of the system providers.
- The need for alternative learning models to provide pathways into sectors and opportunities for career growth and recognition of skills. We need to continue to build up this system and increase business uptake and supplier provision.

- The need to align industry demands for education provision with the supply of learners willing to enrol in courses (this involves assessing whether unmet sector demand is due to insufficient education provision or other factors).
- The need for the training system to be more responsive to change, particularly in industries where the skills and knowledge required to succeed is changing rapidly. Currently the system is too slow to change and adapt.
- The need for a better understanding within the region of what influences under and over supply of student enrolments. These insights can then inform investment.

In addition to this advice, we noted specific spotlight sectors that should be prioritised in terms of education provision. These sectors, including Construction, Digital Technologies, Healthcare, Manufacturing and the Primary Sector, are anticipated to experience high demand.

We also provided career-specific advice reinforcing the potential for a transformational shift in the existing careers provision for rangatahi and those individuals contemplating career change in Canterbury (and across New Zealand). We have engaged with Careers and Transition Education Association NZ Inc. (CATE),

and we support recommendations and initiatives to:

1. Advocate for an environment that enables quality career education.
2. Develop opportunities for enhancing the skills and capability of career educators.
3. Ensure career education and guidance practice is cognisant of, and respects diversity.

# HEI MAHI MĀ TE AKUNGA HOUHARE Ā-ROHE

## REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLAN ACTIONS

This updated Regional Workforce Plan builds on the actions we developed in the inaugural plan in 2022. It has put the spotlight on two additional areas that are important to the region – Primary Sector and Disabled People. These two areas will be a particular focus for our targeted actions and outcomes alongside Healthcare and Social Assistance, Digital Technology, Manufacturing, and Rangatahi.

The Canterbury RSLG has reviewed and regrouped the RWP actions by our three guiding aspirations. The reorganised actions are now primarily cross-cutting, seeking to address key issues identified as being common across multiple spotlight areas.

The updated actions have been developed following stakeholder and partner engagement throughout 2022 and 2023 and will form the basis of our work programme over the next 12 months.

To be successful, these actions will require a collective, regionally joined-up approach. As an RSLG, we will support the coordination, activation and monitoring of these actions – but we will be looking to key stakeholders and partners across the region to lead the way in implementing them.



**Aspiration One Actions:** The workforce has the right skills and capability to support Canterbury’s current and future labour market demands.

Action	Desired Outcomes
<p><b>Future of the Workforce</b></p> <p>Contribute to regional and national policy settings and initiatives that attract and retain the right workforce for Canterbury, supporting the region to thrive and grow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategic labour market position has been developed in the region, in partnership with key parties.</li> <li>• Sectors have more surety on labour supply and are able to plan and invest accordingly.</li> <li>• International students play a strategic part in future labour market opportunities.</li> <li>• Regional insights systematically contribute to immigration settings that will support employers and employees in the region to prosper and meet their full potential.</li> <li>• The Canterbury 'brand' is well-recognised and marketed to a wide range of workers including offshore (returning New Zealanders and migrants) and nationally.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sector Perceptions</b></p> <p>Work with stakeholders to promote awareness and alter misperceptions of the spotlight sectors, highlighting their merits, and the breadth and diversity of opportunities available within them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heightened awareness and appeal of the range of current and future roles across spotlight sectors.</li> <li>• Workforces better reflect diversity of people.</li> <li>• Targeted career development programmes in schools to promote advanced digital, manufacturing, healthcare and primary sectors as viable career pathways for women.</li> <li>• Engage with primary and secondary schools to raise awareness of the contribution by the primary industry to healthy living and a healthy environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Manufacturing and Primary Sector Productivity and Innovation</b></p> <p>Assist and promote the exploration of new learning and upskilling opportunities for the sectors through training pathways, delivery methods and improving access for more current and future employees.</p> <p>Business development and capability building is enhanced, and leaders are encouraged to explore more innovation and investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information is obtained about current recognised learning being utilised in the sector and this information is used to inform new opportunities.</li> <li>• Sectors identify new and emerging workforce needs and partner with trainers and education providers to create digital and practical learning solutions</li> <li>• There is increased uptake of new recognised learning modules which improve both individual and business outcomes.</li> <li>• More businesses are pursuing best practice options to improve productivity and innovation.</li> </ul>

**Aspiration Two Actions:** There is equitable access to the support needed to grow and navigate within the labour market at all stages of a working life.

Action	Desired Outcomes
<p><b>Training Pathways and Models are Relevant and Accessible and Support Learners and Employers Needs</b></p> <p>Facilitate the development and uptake of alternative learning models for learners and industry.</p> <p>Facilitate enhanced connections between training providers and industry to ensure training courses are relevant, and use applicable tools and methods that will build current worker capability and develop work-ready graduates.</p> <p>Co-ordinate the collation of information and insights about the wider mental health workforce to understand barriers and enablers to entering and staying in the sector. Utilise this information to inform and support improvements to the training pipeline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a variety of pathways into the industry that are relevant to the needs of the learner e.g., bonds, scholarships, community-based training, micro credentials.</li> <li>• Apprenticeships and 'learn while you earn' options encourage a more diverse workforce.</li> <li>• Better ways to recognise skills and prior learnings from other roles.</li> <li>• Workforce Development Councils, education providers and government agencies are exploring new ways of designing and delivering programmes.</li> <li>• Training providers incorporate more on-the-job experience options into their programmes.</li> <li>• Best practice training examples are promoted and shared regionally.</li> <li>• Better understanding of where system improvements can support better outcomes for the health sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support Rangatahi Māori</b></p> <p>Support and explore ways to identify and engage with rangatahi Māori who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and explore ways to promote available services.</p> <p>Gain a better understanding of services that are successfully engaging rangatahi Māori on pathways that lead to sustainable high skilled employment.</p> <p>Support kaupapa that uses a holistic approach in mental health planning for rangatahi, encompassing principles like Te Whare Tapa Whā.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insights about, and promotion of, successful engagement models to improve future service provision and appropriate funding for services.</li> <li>• Acknowledgement and promotion of successful models of engagement.</li> <li>• Rangatahi Māori are supported into more sustainable highly skilled career pathways.</li> <li>• Wellbeing and mental health support services for rangatahi are mana-enhancing, accessible and timely.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Career Development Support</b></p> <p>Ensure the RSLG has a strong overview of regional programmes and initiatives that promote the career development of our rangatahi, and recommend to government and provider initiatives to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually improve and adapt programmes so they are targeted towards the diverse needs of our rangatahi.</li> <li>• Facilitate the increased visibility of, and access to, a range of career and education pathways.</li> <li>• Assist in connecting community and whānau to career support schemes.</li> <li>• Support and promote the mahi of CATE and CDANZ.</li> <li>• Utilise Connected.govt.nz platform to showcase different career pathways to increase the career exposure to Rangatahi.</li> </ul> <p>Support ongoing career development support for rangatahi after leaving high school.</p> <p>Promote forums where the voice of rangatahi contributes to career, workplace and workforce redesign conversations to help build workplace environments where they feel included, supported and safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canterbury RSLG, the Ministry of Education and ChristchurchNZ have completed an environmental scan of existing career pathway services available in Canterbury, forming the evidence basis to identify gaps.</li> <li>• Schools are supported to provide more comprehensive and specialised careers advice and meet the expectations of the National Education Learning Priorities (NELP).</li> <li>• Rangatahi are more aware of the different career opportunities available to them, and the requirements and different pathways for entry into different sectors.</li> <li>• Ability to identify barriers that are holding back rangatahi and those groups currently disadvantaged in Canterbury from educational achievement. Better career development support leads to higher course completion rates for tertiary providers.</li> <li>• Rangatahi are aware of what tools and support are available to them on leaving school.</li> <li>• Rangatahi are better represented across business and industry representative/decision-making bodies.</li> <li>• Create supportive pathways to industry pathways and in-work training schemes for those students leaving school early.</li> </ul>

**Aspiration Three Actions:** All workplaces are worker-friendly, safe and inclusive and support both employees and employers to thrive

Action	Desired Outcomes
<p><b>Workplace Diversity</b></p> <p>Support programmes that aim to improve workforce diversity in sectors that are under-represented. This includes groups such as women, Māori, Pacific peoples, Disabled people and new migrants/refugees.</p> <p>Support programmes that look to specifically increase diversity in the manufacturing workforce. In particular groups such as women, Māori, Pacific peoples, Disabled people and new migrants refugees.</p> <p>Develop positive case studies that showcase the success of rangatahi Māori, disabled people, workers, employers and business owners in manufacturing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spotlight sectors have improved visibility and appeal to groups that are either underrepresented or feel unwelcome in their industries. In particular women, Māori, Pacific peoples and Disabled people and new migrants/refugees.</li> <li>• Workplaces embrace diversity and have a culture of inclusion, and the wellbeing of the workforce is valued and supported.</li> <li>• Business focused Cultural Competency training in Cultural awareness and understanding.</li> <li>• Positive case studies showcase the success of rangatahi Māori, workers, employers and business owners in various employment and training programmes across all sectors of the labour market.</li> <li>• Canterbury primary and manufacturing sectors has greater appeal to more groups as an attractive career option they can relate to.</li> <li>• More rangatahi having positive views of the opportunities in primary and manufacturing and seek out careers in the sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Best Practice Workplaces</b></p> <p>Research and map best practices that foster supportive workplace environments and a positive culture among staff, where diversity and safety in the workforce is valued.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of workplaces where barriers are removed for disabled people is shared and made visible with other businesses and employers.</li> <li>• Employers are aware of the programmes, information sources and resources available to them when hiring a disabled people.</li> <li>• Positive case studies showcase the success of rangatahi Māori, disabled people, workers, employers and business owners in various employment and training programmes, across all sectors of the labour market.</li> <li>• Good business practices are promoted and shared, and mentorship programmes are supported.</li> <li>• Māori, Pacific peoples, ethnic minorities, rainbow communities, disabled people and rangatahi feel safe and supported to thrive in the workplace.</li> <li>• Soft skills and personal leadership competencies are developed amongst employers to support positive workplace environments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digital Technology Workforce Diversity – Neurodivergence</b></p> <p>Support and align programmes that look to specifically increase diversity in the advanced digital workforce. Specifically, with Kanorau ioio/neuro divergent community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canterbury advanced digital sector has greater appeal to more diverse groups as an attractive and relatable career option.</li> <li>• More Kanorau ioio/neuro diverse people are encouraged and seeking out careers in digital technology.</li> </ul>

# NGĀ MEMA O RSLG

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# NGĀ MIHI

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We look forward to working with all our partners in the year ahead as we progress the mahi of this plan.

Ngā mihi,  
Canterbury RSLG

See more on the Canterbury RSLG at : <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/employment-and-skills/regional-skills-leadership-groups/canterbury/>

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