

MEETING THE SKILLS CHALLENGE IN NORTHLAND



JULY E-NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first e-letter from the Northland Skills Forum.

This publication will keep you up to date with the implementation of the Regional Skills and Training Strategy, Meeting the Skills Challenge in Northland. It is produced by the members of the Northland Skills Forum, who are:

- **Brian Roberts** ,
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- **Marama Wiki**
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- **Sue Reed**
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- **Carol Ashton**
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What is the Regional Skills and Training Strategy?

This is a long-term, five-year multi-agency strategy aimed at resolving and preventing skill shortages in Northland. It aims to improve the links between schools, training providers, industry groups and employers, and upskill the current and future workforce. It is demand-led and designed to meet the needs of Northland employers by ensuring that training for potential employees is closely aligned to the labour market. The strategy concentrates on three areas:

Human capability – the people factor

Linkages and connections – the networks

Infrastructural issues – the groundwork.

Project Manager Appointed

Damien Banks has been appointed as Project Manager responsible for implementing the strategy's 51 recommendations. Damien is a Career Services consultant and former Work and Income case manager, who also has a private sector background. He has been meeting with key people from around the region to establish working relationships and further develop industry sector groups. He has developed a Youth and Industry group to improve the links between schools and training organisations, and employers and industry.

Youth and Transitions

One of the strategy's key recommendations concerned the ability of young people to make a successful transition from education to employment. There are a number of exciting activities happening in this area, with the establishment of the Whangarei Youth Transition Service (YTS), and the development of a separate YTS for the Far North district, the Designing Careers pilot programme and an increased number of Modern Apprenticeships available in Northland.

These activities are part of the Government's Youth Transitions Strategy which aims to provide an integrated package of initiatives aimed at both school students and school leavers and to ensure that all 15-17 year olds are actively engaged in training or employment

Youth Transition Service

The Whangarei office was the first to operate in the country, opening in February 2005, and the Far North service is scheduled to be operational by October 2005. The Whangarei Youth Transition Service office is located at 6 Bank Street (next door to the Grand Hotel) and can be contacted on (09) 438-0765.

The core objectives of the service are to:

- Monitor young people in Whangarei district aged between 15 and 17 years
- Transition young people from school into education, training or employment
- Build better local level strategic planning between Government agencies, employers, schools, training providers and community groups, to raise the quality of services and opportunities available to young people
- Meet the individual needs of young people who are at risk of prolonged disengagement from work, education or training.

Designing Careers

Designing Careers is a Ministry of Education-funded pilot programme, managed by Career Services, which is being run in five Northland Secondary Schools: Kamo, Tikipunga, Whangarei Boys' and Whangarei Girls' High Schools and Ruawai College. The goal of the project is to support students' transition from school to further study or work by supporting them to plan career and life goals.

The programme is aimed at Year 10 students, and identified senior students at risk of not making a successful transition from school, who develop individual Learning and Career Plans to raise awareness of personal strengths, skills, values and interests and to help them with goal setting. Students' goals are reviewed on a regular basis and shared with parents so this information can be used to assist with subject choices or planning a transition from school.

“Designing Careers is a great example of an integrated approach where Career Services consultants are working closely with school staff to provide a comprehensive and well resourced career planning programme” says Career Services' Jennifer Ross.

Employer & Industry Links

One of the key aspects of achieving sustainable economic growth and dealing with skills shortages in Northland is to ensure that training meets the needs of industry and employers. While it is critical that businesses have appropriately skilled staff, it is also essential that their own business management needs and issues are being met. For this reason, information will be collated from employers in key sectors (including forestry and wood processing, tourism, building and related trades, marine construction, retail and transport) to obtain feedback on the quality of pre-employment training, modern apprenticeships and skills issues, as well as business information and growth issues facing employers over the next five years.

Workplace Literacy

Major employers in Northland will be approached to consider utilising workplace literacy initiatives as a way to improve productivity, customer service and staff retention. These benefits are just a few noted by employers who have taken the lead in organising literacy training for their staff. There are proven links between literacy, numeracy and other skills, such as self-management, team work and leadership, while low literacy skills have been shown to limit economic growth and competitiveness.

In the past, business has tended to see literacy as the responsibility of the school system. However this is increasingly changing, with employers looking at upskilling their workforce as an investment rather than a cost. Recently, the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC) Workplace Literacy Fund has supported more than 30 projects involving 600 staff in a range of occupations.

For more information on workplace literacy assistance contact:

Tertiary Education Commission

Ground Level, Rathbone Business Centre
49 – 53 James Street, Whangarei
Phone (09) 438-7500 | [Website: www.tec.govt.nz](http://www.tec.govt.nz)

Literacy Whangarei

Provides assistance to people with their literacy skills on a one to one basis.
71 Bank Street , Whangarei
Phone (09) 438-2511

Venture Consulting

Can meet on-site to discuss the specific needs of your business, and then tailor-make and implement a programme which targets the literacy priorities you have identified for your business.

35 Robert Street , Whangarei
Phone (09) 438-7750 | Email: jill@venturegroup.co.nz

Whangarei Youth Transition Service Update

Whangarei YTS Manager Leonie McGee states that, since opening at the end of February this year, 146 young people have registered with the service for intervention. Of those, 40 were referred to employment, 43 to further training, 10 have exited the service (meaning they had left the area or were outside the target group), and the remaining 63 are still being case managed by the service.

On top of all this, 1,278 young people have been entered into the Whangarei YTS database and their details are being monitored on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis, depending on their individual need.

Leonie said: “Selma and Eru, our two co-ordinators, are quite passionate about helping our young people gain a positive outcome. They are working in cohesion with private training establishments, Work and Income, CYFS, Aramoana Adventures, The Pulse, the Alternative Education Co-ordinator, NetServe, Ministry of Education, Te Uri o Hau, the police and, of course, secondary schools, either referring or receiving young people to or from these services.”

She added: “Most of our clients come from school leaver lists, and evidence shows that approximately 5% of our young people leaving school do not actually end up where they say they are going, like employment, another school or further training; hence the necessity for a service such as this. The rest are referrals, for example from other social services, private training establishments and alternative education programmes.”

For more information or feedback on the Northland Skills and Training Strategy, contact: **Damien Banks** on 09-438 8875, or dbanks@careers.govt.nz