

# Training, Education, & Workforce Development

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Firstly a bit of background:

Although born outside New Zealand I completed most of my tertiary education here and have spent most of my working life in this country.

I work full time in a multi-disciplinary sector that is experiencing skills shortages in a number of areas.

For professional development reasons I have considered postgraduate education options from time to time and have been frustrated by an education and training system that appears to be generally out of step with the real world.

I therefore welcome the Commission's inquiry into these matters.

## **TRAINING**

### **Migrants**

Migrants often face a perceived 'lack of New Zealand experience' barrier. This barrier is essentially a perception that whatever work and life experience was obtained overseas is less relevant than that obtained in New Zealand. Migrants are often recruited and granted work permits or residency based on their skills and experience only to find that potential employers view anything not done in New Zealand with a degree of scepticism. The scepticism is understandable to some degree however I believe more could be done to help migrants transition into NZ society and the workforce.

Offering state subsidised training options for migrants in key subjects that would improve their employability could be an option e.g. introductory courses in NZ government and legislation, doing business in New Zealand, introduction to NZ culture and history etc.

### **Vocational Education & Training**

There is currently no entry level 'stepping stone' option available via polytechnics and the like for some professions e.g. planning, local government/public administration. University is currently the only entry point.

There appears to be a lack of 'stepping stone' qualifications in some fields particularly at Diploma-level. This essentially splits the workforce into a tradespeople/technicians and graduates with few options to step-up into higher level technical or managerial positions without going to university.

The proliferation of industry training organisations adds to the confusion about study options. I counted five separate ITOs overseeing courses that were of relevance to the sector. This disjointed and competing offering potentially makes it difficult for prospects to find information about appropriate training options.

I support a centralised issuing authority for VTE qualifications (essentially a Polytechnic of New Zealand) but so have concerns about potential reduction in healthy competition between polytechnics and associated effects on quality.

I agree there is need to improve learners' ability to switch in tertiary education. There needs to be improvement in recognition of prior learning as well as transfer to other providers. The reality is relatively few people remain in the same place geographically for long and there are few providers who specialise in distance education.

There is a need to promote modular, part-time and distance study options.

I agree that time and cost are barriers to further education and training. Given the majority of business are small businesses, the majority of local authorities are small councils, a lack of student allowances and loans for postgraduate/career changers vs undergraduates etc.

There appears to be a lack of information about careers and training options. Polytechnic and University websites and calendars are of variable quality. In my experience even student advisors seldom seem to know the subject matter and tend to give generic responses to enquiries. People who work full time generally do not have the time to muck around and extract the relevant information from training providers.

## **EDUCATION**

There certainly appears to be a bias towards University education. This is potentially because this is the traditional path that teachers and career guidance advisers have followed and are therefore most familiar with.

There appears to be limited career guidance. The official government careers website could be improved. There are a number of careers missing off the list for a start.

Clearer pathways to further education and employment are needed.

The proliferation of industry training organisations needs to be addressed but care needs to be taken that some careers do not lose representation as part of the reforms.

Improvement is needed in learners' ability to switch in tertiary education.

More focus is needed on providing modular, part-time and distance study options for people already in the workforce.

Funding barriers that favour residential, full time education need to be addressed.