What next?
National Conversation about Work
Éhara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini.

Ours is not the strength of one, it is the strength of many.
Foreword

The National Conversation about Work belongs to all of the employees, employers, agencies, community groups, mayors and politicians who helped the Human Rights Commission with the project over the past two years.

It was more than just talk. The National Conversation about Work represents the views of thousands of New Zealanders working in a wide variety of industry sectors in cities, provinces and rural communities. They’ve spoken about what constitutes good work and what makes for decent workplaces. They’ve identified how work can be improved to increase productivity and profitability and at the same time enhance family life, and community well-being.

The Commission visited the 16 regions of New Zealand at a time of dramatic labour market change as the economic recession took hold. The emotion and pain associated with redundancy and unemployment, as well as the resilience of employers and communities in facing new market challenges, was evident in many workplaces.

The Commission has taken all of the material gathered in regional reports to produce this summary called What next? National Conversation about Work. It reveals the top ten priority issues for equal employment opportunities (EEO) in New Zealand, develops recommendations for action and identifies twelve examples of good ideas and best practice in the section. Making equality work. All of the material will be used by the Human Rights Commission to develop a new Equality at Work framework over the next year, aimed at changing legislation, policy and practice to progress equal employment opportunities.

Thank you for sharing your insights with us. We’re keen to get your feedback on the recommendations and priorities for action. Please email me at judym@hrc.co.nz.

Dr Judy McGregor
EEO Commissioner
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Introduction

The National Conversation is about fairness at work. Two years ago the Human Rights Commission undertook to engage in a nation-wide series of engagements to listen to employers, employees, organisations, businesses and community groups about what would make a difference for employees to achieve greater equality and fairness at work and how this might impact on their families. The Commission also hopes to assist employers to implement good employer practices including EEO by learning what needs they have and what their current employment issues are. As well as face to face meetings, participants could engage in the project electronically through a dedicated website or by writing to us. An introductory video clip featuring thirteen New Zealanders talking about their working lives was produced to introduce the project online and as a conversation starter at meetings.

The Human Rights Commission has talked to more than three thousand people all over New Zealand. We have talked to people about work from Kaitaia to Bluff, from East Cape to Hokitika. We have talked to people who work up mountains, down mines, at sea, on the land and in the air. We have talked to school students who work before and after school and in holidays and to “retired” people who work unpaid for their families and for the community. We have talked to people who want to work but cannot get employment. We have talked to employers from large companies, employers in small to medium-sized businesses, family businesses, and the self-employed. We met employees, employers, community groups and unions. We met people in board rooms, smoko rooms, community halls, offices, on marae, around kitchen tables, in cafés, classrooms and hotel lobbies.

The first conversations were held in November 2008 and the last in May 2010. During that time the global economic crisis changed the employment market and questions about the effects of the recession were included in our conversations from the time of labour market change.

We visited each of the sixteen regions of New Zealand, and for each a regional report was compiled and published on-line on the NEON website at www.neon.org.nz. In each region we approached local government and, in particular, economic development agencies to advise us on key businesses and industries in the region. We wrote to Members of Parliament about the project to inform them of regional visits and to seek business and community contacts. We attempted to cover as wide a range of population groups as we could, especially those we knew to be disadvantaged at work, such as migrant groups and people with disabilities. We were keen to meet groups who were working in non-traditional fields. In many regions we sought meetings with successful Māori businesses.
Methodology

The project was made possible by the generosity of employers, managers, union organisers, community leaders and individuals in giving us their time and arranging meetings for us. Very few companies of the hundreds we approached turned down our request to meet, and consequently, we went to many workplaces and met many people who had no previous contact with the Commission. Meetings were generally an hour long.

The following key questions were asked of all employees in the National Conversation about Work:

- What do you like about working here?
- What would make a difference for you to achieve equality at work?

The following questions were asked of employers:

- What are your most pressing issues related to employment?
- Do you need assistance to improve EEO in your workplace?
- What kind of assistance would be most helpful?

These questions were followed by a general discussion about equality and fairness at work and what is needed to effect the desired change. Typically these discussions elicited a wealth of personal stories about work, both positive and negative and highlighted a number of issues related to fairness at work.

Participants in the National Conversation about Work included population groups identified as EEO target groups in legislation because of their well documented disadvantages in getting work and in their conditions of employment. These groups include people with disabilities, Māori, other ethnic groups and women. Insights provided by these groups are included in the aspect of work which most impacts on them.

At the conclusion of each regional engagement, conversations were written up in regional reports with anonymised comments unless specific permission was provided by the participants. Draft reports were sent to participants for verification before they were finalised and published on the website.
Employment myths

During the course of the project three big myths about work were shattered. While they may linger in popular wisdom, they are not the day to day reality in workplaces. These were that everyday work is awful and that only leisure is bliss, all “bosses are bastards” and that all “workers are slackers”.

The first myth is that work is a “Monday through Friday sort of dying”. Instead of work as a burden that people bear out of necessity, participants overwhelmingly indicated that work is a critical source of well-being and identity expressed by the whakatauki: “Mauri Mahi, Mauri Ora, Mauri Noho, Mauri Mate” (A working soul is a healthy soul).

The second myth is that all “bosses are bastards”. It was our observation that employers we met, especially in smaller businesses were more likely to treat their staff as extended family than as labour units.

Many of the employers we spoke to were responsive to their employees’ needs, such as family responsibilities, emergencies and other life events, and were devastated by the emotional trauma of redundancies when they had to lay off staff. The nature of New Zealand firms is that 99 per cent of New Zealand businesses employing 60 per cent of our workers are small to medium enterprises (SMEs). In SMEs “everyone knows your name”.

“I look after my staff as my own family. I pay for birthdays off. I pay for medical insurance. I recognise long service and will help my staff when they are cash strapped. Over the last year I’ve invested more on sending people to courses and other learning and development opportunities. We pay for everything.”

The third myth is that “workers are slackers”. There was almost universal enthusiasm by employees not just for the socialisation of work but of the tasks, functions and professionalism required of them by the changing labour market.

“Work defines me, it’s who I am. I have to want to go to work, be challenged and inspired.”

Most of the people we spoke to enjoyed their work, cared about the people they work with, were proud of the services or product they delivered and loved the daily challenges of working life. Income is not the only thing lost when a person loses a job. They lose social networks, purpose, and pride as well.

Employees in the economic recession were acutely aware of the pressures employers were under.
Framework of this report

Rather than present the findings as a list, this summary report is presented against the Right to Work framework developed by the Human Rights Commission to analyse employment-related human rights.

The inner circle adopts an employment cycle approach, moving from pre-work situations such as protection from unemployment contained in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through pathways to work. It then moves to the multiplicity and complexity of on-the-job issues that affect employers and employees while at work. Finally, exiting the labour market, either temporarily or permanently, is another major transition point in the employment cycle. The major critical issues from the wide range of issues and insights detailed in the regional reports have been selected by the Commission and presented against the Right to Work framework.

In the next section of the report, issues that relate to Protection from Unemployment are outlined. The challenges and opportunities relating to how people access employment are then discussed in Pathways to Work. The myriad of on-the-job issues that arose in the regions are debated next, followed by a section on older-worker issues in Transition from the Labour Market.
Protection from unemployment

The importance of work to New Zealanders as a source of well-being beyond an economic transaction became starkly clear during the course of the conversations. This insight came when participants talked about what they liked about their work and when people talked about the emotional and social impact of redundancy, retirement and trying to enter or re-enter the workforce. While income sufficiency is important, work clearly provides more than a pay-cheque. This was illustrated, for example, by the wall art at Matahari Marae in Hawke’s Bay which told of the long-term impact of the closure of the Whakatu meatworks on community well-being.

Employers are currently caught between ensuring essential skills are retained in anticipation of the economic recovery and staying economically viable. We heard many employers expressing their reluctance to take a chance on new staff as the economy recovered. Employers in some sectors are nervous about hiring and are seeking alternative ways of ensuring sufficient labour to make their business profitable or stable. Strategies include doing more work themselves, expanding the range of work required of employees, casualising jobs using variations of temporary, short-term, casual and seasonal employment and adopting more conservative hiring practices.

We observed that many employers were less willing to give people a go, because they were keen to operate a lean labour force. In particular this appears to be impacting on younger people and those with disabilities. A Nelson participant who ran a disability support agency said, “When there was low unemployment and people were struggling to fill jobs, employers were opening their eyes to possibilities in the labour market (of employing people with disabilities). The pressure is off now. The triple bottom line has gone.” The triple bottom line approach involving ‘people, planet and profit’ recognised social and environmental as well as economic impacts of business. A support worker in Whakatane told us about a young disabled woman who had recently lost her part-time job. The consequences for her and the people around her were profound. Her distress at the loss of meaningful employment and the high level of anxiety this provoked meant that she required a much higher level of support than she had required previously.

Globally, the prospect of a “jobless recovery” has been flagged. Those who are frequently marginalised in the labour market, such as people with disabilities and young people with minimal academic qualifications, are struggling to gain
employment at the moment, particularly in the unskilled or semi-skilled labour market.

Many of the vulnerable and disadvantaged people who lose jobs or are unemployed and receive social security assistance want both to get back to work as soon as possible, and to reduce their dependency on benefits. It is the unavailability of suitable, decent work and the availability of affordable child-care where they live that relentlessly limits their participation in the workforce.

“Government desperately needs to invest in work schemes, especially for those made redundant or returning to work, otherwise they will lose skills and confidence to re-enter the market – help them build their skills and confidence.”

The Commission was struck by the vulnerability of provincial New Zealand to layoffs in dominant industries. The loss of several hundred jobs from one company or one industry in smaller centres has a much more significant impact on the whole community than is the case in urban New Zealand. This was described as an “eco-system” approach in Hawke’s Bay. “If an anchor company falls over, it is not 100 jobs that go but 400. If you map the supply chain that supports the anchor company, you see how inter-dependent businesses are.” In situations where large employers employ several generations, families often have the same employer and a company closure puts all the income earners of a family out of work.

In areas such as Northland, a worker may be the breadwinner for the extended family and job loss will impact on more than one household. “Māori workers are more likely to be supporting two or three families. A loss of income for these people would have a wide-reaching impact.”

Secondly, the primary industry of a town is supported by a number of service industries or businesses, so job losses have a ripple effect throughout the community. And thirdly, alternative work is harder to come by and so people either start to move away or struggle to make ends meet on a benefit.

In the Rodney district, the local council and Irwin’s Tools employed the most staff. The recession has resulted in the loss of 105 jobs from Irwin’s Tools and 40 jobs from another employer. This amounted to an estimated $8m loss from the local economy. We were told that commercial construction had dried up and business confidence was low. According to the Rodney Economic Development Trust, “three out of five employers are finding it hard to do business at this time and too many small businesses are not taking a longer-term view to keep themselves safe in tough economic times”.

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A large employer involved in laying off staff had the following advice for others:

“It’s important to be empathetic with people, especially in rural areas where everyone knows everyone. In difficult times it’s important to be honest with staff and tell them what is going on. Tell staff what the business looks like. Warn them that things are not particularly good, they can see for themselves from forward orders and production if things aren’t right”.

The company named the three elements of open communication, union involvement and limited negative media coverage as lessons to other employers faced with redundancies.

The lack of wider community awareness and subsequent planning about the potential for major company layoffs is an issue in many regions. Job creation schemes and regional initiatives to assist people into work varied from region to region and depended on precarious funding. Some authorities have taken a regional approach to supporting job retention and growth, others were less active. For example, programmes developed by Hastings District Council, in conjunction with the local Work and Income office, have enabled a number of “hard-to-place” youth to get into short-term jobs that provide a positive work experience, build confidence, work skills and provide labour for much-needed community projects. Critically the human resource infrastructure for the community projects was provided by the council. Many of these schemes, even examples of exemplary good practice, appear to be operating in isolation from one another.

We also heard that regional and sub-regional employment strategies were hampered by the lack of labour force data and trend analysis at a sufficiently disaggregated level for planning purposes. For example, in the Manawatu region the two major cities, Palmerston North and Wanganui, have quite distinct labour market characteristics but are conflated in regional statistics.

During the course of the project the Commission visited “business enterprises” in Invercargill and Dunedin which provide people with disabilities employment, who, it is argued, would be unable to compete for work in the open labour market. We also heard from disability advocacy groups about the very low rate of pay received by some disabled workers (as low as 15c an hour). They believe that while business enterprises which operated like sheltered workshops remained an option, supported work opportunities in the open labour market were not being fully implemented.

Business enterprises came into being after the repeal, in 2007, of the Disabled Persons Employment Promotions (DPEP) Act 1960, which resulted in the closure
of sheltered workshops. In reality, people receiving a wage below the minimum have their income supplemented by a social welfare benefit. Applications are made for minimum wage exemptions on behalf of individuals who undertake a productivity assessment under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labour.

The employment of people with disabilities at rates below the minimum wage is controversial. The Commission heard all sides of the argument – from employers and employees, from business enterprises and from disability advocacy groups. Opponents of the exemption system say that it is discriminatory and alternate processes that support people with disabilities to work in the open labour market are necessary. Proponents argue that workers in business enterprises would not otherwise be employed and that working supports social inclusion and promotes well-being.

Employees from a business enterprise told us, “work gives you something to get up for”, “there’s no judgement here” and “it doesn’t matter what kind of disability you have, you feel safe.” A disability advocate from Disabled Persons Assembly told us “Repeal of the DPEP Act was seen as the answer but still discrimination happens. There’s an expectation that people can and do work in the community but the support is not available.”

Pathways to work

Young people

In most regions visited youth unemployment was raised as a concern. In some areas tertiary-qualified, young people were struggling to gain employment but in many areas the most disadvantaged youth were those who had low levels of educational attainment. Māori and Pacific young people were seen as groups who were at risk of an uncertain employment future.

Employers frequently expressed a preference for experienced workers and we heard many accounts of young people’s lack of job readiness and absence of a work ethic. This was often characterised as an attitude problem. One Gisborne employer said “we had employed a young male who turned up for work drunk or late, and so now we try to get older workers”. However, another participant from the same region said “We don’t have any issues. It would be dealt with quickly if there was. Young ones rejuvenate the place.”

Another Gisborne employer told us about a young person who turned up to a job interview in pyjamas. One astute participant noted that creating job opportunities
out in the community enables the young people to build up their job experience and also gave prospective employers the experience of seeing young people as capable and enthusiastic workers.

“There needs to be real development/career guidance in schools. They don’t get good advice. Some schools offer outdated ideas or limited options and don’t seem to have the depth or breadth of knowledge to really help students.”

There are various youth-to-work initiatives operating in many regions and we visited several outstanding examples of regional good practice. The Incubator programme in Hawke’s Bay targeted low-decile schools and the Wonderful Wahine programme targeted young Māori women at Nelson Girls’ College. In Otorohanga, the Trade Training Centre had successfully kept youth employment at zero per cent and apprenticeship completion rates above 90 per cent compared to a less than 20 per cent national average. The scheme has immense community support. We heard that “If young people get employed in Otorohanga now, employers ask ‘have you got your pre-trade through OTTC or have you been to see Ray’ (the Trade Apprentice Coordinator and fondly referred to as Camp Mother).”

Many of these schemes have been developed by local government and supported by central government funding streams. The Mayors’ Taskforce for Jobs has been very active in these initiatives. It is apparent that funding for youth-to-work initiatives is both variable and precarious and there is little certainty about their viability from year to year.

Award-winning company NZSki in Queenstown has cracked the problem of engaging the enthusiasm of younger workers which has eluded many other employers. The company has taken pro-active steps to better understand the motivations and needs of its mainly Generation Y employees (those aged 18-30 years). The business has used new SMART technology to track workers’ behaviours. “They [Gen-Y] want constant feedback, so we give it to them. We also reward the behaviours we want from them, for example giving good customer service. We hire for attitude and train for skill”. The benefits of NZSki’s approach are apparent in its staff retention and engagement rates.
In Taranaki some secondary students worked up to 30 hours per week either before or after school. Several had been told by teachers to “reduce the number of hours” they worked.

Students earned between $12 per hour, the (then) minimum wage, and up to $30 per hour. Those who earned the minimum wage rate or slightly higher were satisfied that this was “fair pay” for the work they did.

Universally students wanted better access to plain English information about employee rights, qualifications, courses and career pathways. When asked what they liked most about work, students said, “Work is fun and enjoyable; I like the interaction with other people and getting to meet new people”.

**Disabled people**

People with disabilities face considerable difficulties securing and sustaining employment and problems of underemployment. Disabled people with tertiary qualifications experience the same level of unemployment as non-disabled people without qualifications and in general disabled people are twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people. Data on the employment situation of disabled people is limited.

A Southland participant using a wheelchair said “you have to work harder to prove your worth”. “At work I find that I try to keep one step ahead of everyone, always planning and preparing in advance so that in my role I don’t appear to be incompetent, needy or different from anyone else.” A disabled person from Auckland talked about “the feeling that you need never to be a burden, always reasonable, as good as everyone else but better”. Another described this as self-stigmatising, “it’s really tough and burns you out”. A deaf job-seeker in Hawke’s Bay said “All they look at is what we can’t do, not what we can do.”

The people we spoke to indicated that successfully gaining employment or indeed an interview is a major challenge. A group of Deaf in Hawke’s Bay talked about the multiple barriers inherent in the recruitment process. They talked about assistance needed for preparing Curricula Vitae (CVs), phoning prospective employers and organising an interpreter for the rare occasions when they got a job interview. There is no resident sign interpreter in Hawke’s Bay. Sadly the interpreter was often perceived by prospective employers as a support person rather than as an impartial interpreter.

Fears that lack of hearing created a higher risk in terms of health and safety were also prevalent. We were told Deaf people “listen with their eyes” and are just as aware (if not more) of what is going on in their surroundings than hearing people.
“The primary issue is lack of understanding because if there is understanding then there’s a will on the part of employers to provide the tools or provide the environment that is required to help someone with hearing loss work,” said Chris Peters, a journalist with a hearing disability.

Employers appeared to be unwilling to give disabled people a go and were apprehensive about what employing a person with a disability might entail. A Christchurch group told us that a critical task is to “reduce the fear about what disability might mean for employers. Accommodating special needs doesn’t have to be a big deal, everyone has special needs.”

Incorrect assumptions were made about what an individual disabled person might need to make employment work. Conversations about the practical implications of employment were avoided. For example, a group of blind people meeting in Wellington told us that interviewers did not ask about how guide dogs might behave at work and instead assumed that the dog would be as boisterous and disruptive as their family pet.

We observed that employers were much more likely to be supportive and accommodate a person’s needs if they had acquired their disability after being employed, because the employer and co-workers already have a relationship with the person and want to make it work. In one case a 40-year-old who had suffered a stroke took 18 months to return to work but when an approach was made to his employer, he was welcomed back and a job created with new boundaries reflecting the genuine skills of the stroke victim. Employers with a disabled family member are also more likely to be open to employing a disabled person. We heard that the state sector could do more to model good practice in providing equal employment opportunities to disabled people.

One participant summed up the need for attitudinal change by employers when he said, “If we were to look at [disabled] people as an investment rather than look at them as a pathology or as a disability and if we were to look at people’s abilities rather than disabilities, I think we would be in a different spot”.

A Waikato public servant with visual impairment spoke about the effect of his disability on his work. In his role, he had received great support from his employer to acquire assistive technology that would allow him to do his job. This included a large monitor, document magnification equipment as well as having a supportive manager. “I just had to pluck up the courage to say I needed some help,” he said.
A particularly vexed issue is whether or not to disclose experience of mental illness. An Auckland group of people with experience of mental health issues are of the view that disclosure on application forms or unexplained gaps in CVs means they are unlikely to be offered a job interview. However, non-disclosure carries the risk that their needs will not be accommodated should they become unwell, and in extreme cases be dismissed for dishonesty. Legal considerations include the appropriateness of questions in the application form and the steps taken to avoid discriminatory practices. One participant with experience of mental illness said “The crux of the argument around disclosure is that there is still a lot of stigma around employability - there’s the view that if you’ve got a mental illness you’re actually not employable. You can’t handle stress, you’re potentially dangerous to yourself and to others, you are a lot of extra work, you’re unreliable, you will take lots of time off.”

**Migrants**

Migrant workers told us that there were a number of ways that discrimination was expressed when they sought work. We heard from Chinese Aucklanders that some migrants “anglicize” their name to increase the chance of being interviewed for a job; “repackaging yourself for the New Zealand market” one Chinese Aucklander told us. “As long as I know who I am and what I am then it shouldn’t worry me,” said one participant.

We also heard that employers sought “Kiwi experience” and English as a first language. The Commission’s widely circulated pre-employment guide, the A-Z, [http://www.neon.org.nz/eoissues/Pre-employmentguidelines/](http://www.neon.org.nz/eoissues/Pre-employmentguidelines/) provides advice to prospective employees and employers about what is permissible under the Human Rights Act.

Another barrier is qualifications and professional accreditation.

> *In the health sector, it is so hard to recruit migrant nurses. We desperately need them but can’t get medical staff because of the self-serving barriers some professional organisations put in place. This put lots of pressure and stress on existing staff.)*

Longveld Engineering in Hamilton has developed a numeracy and literacy programme to assist migrant employees and has found that it has benefited Kiwi-born employees as well.
Pacific participants in South Auckland pointed out that speakers of other languages were an asset for employers especially when customers and clients spoke the language. They argued that language skills should be valued by employers. “At work you take your Pacific ethnicity with you. It’s not something that’s specific in your remuneration package. It’s part of who you are and it’s positive for employers.”

**Non-traditional career choices**

Career choices in New Zealand are still limited by gender stereotyping, but we met a number of people who have challenged cultural norms and made non-traditional choices. We heard about female air traffic controllers employed by the Airways Corporation, headquartered in Christchurch, and women sea captains at Whalewatch in Kaikoura. In both cases EEO strategies were used to encourage women into these roles. In the case of Airways, targeted advertising was used, and in the case of Whalewatch, educational opportunities were made available.

Equally, we met with men in non-traditional jobs. A group of male kindergarten teachers in Christchurch has set up mutual support structures and actively promote early childhood careers as a job for other men.

The group is active in promoting men as early childhood teachers, producing posters and going to secondary schools to talk to career advisers and students about their jobs. They also encourage young men considering career options to go and see early childhood centres. The group supports affirmative action to increase the number of men in the sector.

Garth Armstrong, an early childhood teacher in Wellington, who featured in the introductory video, said, “We also want to promote the fact that men can be early childhood teachers and for the community to see that we are doing the job as effectively as women, just in our own male way.”

The Navy, which has the highest gender ratio of the three armed forces at 23 per cent, tries to reflect society. “You can’t deny 50 per cent of the population.” We heard of greater promotion of women in the Navy, but also the high number of women who become pregnant directly affects deployment into the field.

The highest ranking female officer in an army group spoken to at Waiouru said the career management structure was now identical for men and women. “When I was commissioned, women could only join certain branches. I wanted to be an infantry officer but I couldn’t as combat trades were not open to women then.”
On-the-job issues

Working hours

Many of the workplaces visited in the course of the National Conversation do not operate within a Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm “norm”. Hours and days of work vary considerably across the labour market. “Non-standard” working hours include: shift work, seasonal work, casual and precarious work, and fluctuating work demands for self-employed and business owners.

Non-standard working hours present a number of challenges to workers and their families. Services that employees require to sustain employment such as childcare facilities are usually open standard hours. Miners on the West Coast told us that relationships can be difficult to sustain when working hours do not synchronise and little time is available for shared activities. One mine worker said, “My partner and I both work shifts, we get a weekend off together once every five to six weeks.”

Long work hours, sometimes with travelling time on top, are chronic in some organisations and some sectors. Some of those working extra long hours do so out of loyalty, because they need the money and because it is an industry expectation. However, workers spoke of the negative effects on sleeping patterns, family relationships and social activity. Women lawyers told us that “part-time work in law is eight hours a day”, and that women lawyers were going into their own businesses as ‘barristers sole’ or into small practices to get the flexibility they need to combine parenthood and a legal career.

On the other hand, some employers considered long work hours to be part of everyday business and expected employees to work to the demands of the job. A manager working at Port Taranaki told us: “We expect our staff to man up for peak times and to work reasonable over-time”.

Work practices to minimise the harm of chronic fatigue vary considerably. Barriers to implementing safer shift patterns include cost of recovery time, the cost of running more than two work crews, costs associated with covering absences, costs of transport to the worksite and the desire of employees to maximise take-home pay.

Migrant workers employed in sectors such as viticulture, dairying and horticulture, including those employed under the Recognised Employers Scheme, experienced a wide range of working conditions. Groups of workers in South Canterbury,
Southland and in Marlborough told us about employment practices that included very long working hours with infrequent days off, inadequate accommodation, as well as problems with pay.

Long working hours were said to be a common problem on dairy farms in the South Island where we heard of the following working patterns: 11 days on, 3 days off; 6 days on, 1 day off; 6 days on, 2 days off, and 29 days on, 2 days off. The hours worked over those shift patterns was not made explicit to many of the migrant workers we spoke to. This merits further investigation to ensure compliance with minimum wage and other employment legislation.

Parents also face long work hours and have to juggle family demands and employment. A group of Auckland human resource professionals made the following comments:

“I had to chase my two-year-old out of the room at home to take a conference call.”

“Kids need to have parents who are not consumed by work.”

“The reality is there is more and more work. Work-life balance can be a joke. It’s harder and harder to switch off. We have to stop letting work take over. The technology of emails and phones and constant availability breaks into family time.”

Active health and safety programmes are highly valued in workplaces with a commitment to eliminating and reducing harm at work.

During the course of the project, the issue of health and safety aspects of shift patterns was raised on the West Coast, Northland and in Southland. The health and safety risks inherent in disturbed sleep patterns are well documented. Shift workers, especially those working “graveyard shifts”, have a higher than normal
risk of accidents because of fatigue due to sleep disturbance. Relationships are also put at risk.

Both employers and employees expressed a preference for flexible working approaches, and while flexible working arrangements are particularly helpful for parents and people with dependent care responsibilities, other groups seek flexible approaches too. Some participants cautioned that limited availability of flexible work patterns (for example, to those with care responsibilities only) can create an unfair burden on colleagues, unless managed to ensure that did not happen.

“I would like to work four days a week but I don’t think my boss is ready for the conversation. I don’t have children, it’s just a lifestyle choice after 25 years working.”

In one Bay of Plenty workplace an employee observed that the number of available staff constrained flexibility, “if things turn to custard it would be great if you had someone on standby – someone in the cupboard, that would be good but it will never happen,” she said.

Flexible arrangements included variable start and finish times, working from home, compressed hours, and part-time work variations. Part-time work includes shorter hours, or fewer than five days a week, but can include a shorter working year (school term time working or longer holiday breaks).

The increased labour market participation of women has partly driven flexible work legislation. However, more men want flexible work too.

“More men are taking the chance to work flexibly in a different way, maybe for family or for something they are passionate about. My company is great but my husband experienced something different when he wanted to share parenting by working four days per week. His company pushed back and said no. He was gutted. The business just said it wasn’t possible.”
Flexibility is also offered in relation to the place of work. A number of workers are able to work from home for example, and are supplied with the necessary technology to do so.

The Thames Coromandel District Council has implemented a remote working policy that sets out criteria allowing staff to work remotely for up to two days a week from such places as their home, a satellite location or a Telework Centre. Ten employees of the Thames Coromandel District Council were currently working in this way. A project to scan all property information and files is underway at the Council and would potentially allow building inspectors to work remotely, including from their cars with assistive technologies.

Some flexible arrangements have been developed in response to the recession and others in response to retaining and attracting staff. A number of workplaces recognise the realities of daily life and offer flexibility so that employees can attend to non-work tasks during the working day. This level of trust is highly valued by staff. While the payoff to employers in terms of productivity and loyalty was acknowledged, this practice was most often underpinned by values, exemplified by manaakitanga (caring).

Māori-owned businesses around the country saw Māori concepts of whānaungatanga (family) and manaakitanga as being crucial in their work environments. In Wellington one business manager told us, “We are a whānau-based company with family values. Staff are treated as part of the extended family.” A worker at the same business said, “I can take time for the whānau whenever it suits, they’re really good about that here”.

**Conditions of work, migrant workers**

Outside of the major centres “inherent conservatism in business and parochial attitudes meant some employers have difficulty with employing migrants,” we were told. Prior to visiting the Queenstown Lakes District, newspaper reports indicated an increase in the number of complaints to the Citizens’ Advice Bureau by migrant workers. Typical complaints by migrant employees included not being paid holiday pay, being told they had lesser rights because they were on working holiday visas and being told they were not entitled to leave. Advocacy workers thought that this was just the “tip of the iceberg”. “Migrants,” we were told, “were less likely to complain because they were in the area for a short period of time or would simply find another job elsewhere.”
Support services for migrants are not as readily available in small towns as in urban centres. The importance of settlement support infrastructure was emphasised by both migrants and other community workers. In Marlborough the influx of migrant seasonal labourers meant a greater demand for immigration support services. The absence of a regionally based office in Blenheim, where demand is the highest, meant Department of Labour officers had to travel from Nelson to address issues of apparent exploitation of migrant workers in the wine industry.

Employers in a number of areas, the Marlborough wine industry, the Southland dairy industry and Bay of Plenty fruit growers, talked about rogue operators who harmed the reputation of their sector. One participant said “KGI (Kiwifruit Growers Institute) have done a marvellous job of squeezing out the rat-bag contractors who were employing illegal workers and exploiting them.” A Southland farmer said: “It affects the whole industry; they (fair employers) don’t like people muddying the mat.” In the Waikato one particular advocate for decent working rights in the rural sector wrote, “I was reminded that our community has a ‘duty of care’ towards its workers. I am talking of the honest hardworking ones who have the misfortune to encounter unreasonable and pedantic employers. Communities must ensure that such soul-destroying experiences do not continue. It is not acceptable that we sit back. These concerns must be addressed.”

“Many seasonal contractors took a responsible attitude to the obligations imposed by the RSE scheme. A small number of others have, unfortunately, exploited the situation to the point where it could be considered a violation of human rights. The adverse publicity of apparent exploitation could seriously affect the reputation of the Marlborough wine product and region in international markets.”

Progress Marlborough Economic Development Strategy 2008

Best practice included decent working conditions, fair pay, identified hours and days off and responsible pastoral care. This includes employers’ commitment to community development back in a worker’s place of origin, such as in some Pacific Islands. For example, the Mayor of Queenstown, Clive Geddes spoke
about a transient workforce that comes to Queenstown from surrounding towns and districts and the need to put philanthropy back into seasonal migrant employment schemes so that Pacific Island communities benefit at home.

**Parenting and dependent care**

The provision of high-quality, affordable, accessible and available early childhood education benefits both young children and their parents, and ultimately the community. Many working parents are unable to realise full employment because there are no early childhood education centres in their locality. For example, in the Maniototo area, a group of women is trying to establish an early childhood education centre which will enable them to return to work, better integrate the migrant community and provide local children with early childhood education. The situation in rural communities is especially acute. Army personnel in Waiouru spoke about the need to provide child-care for staff deployed in the field and to accommodate older recruits.

In some rural communities we heard that skilled migrants had been successfully recruited but were not able to be retained because their spouses were not able to work, often because child-care was not available. We heard that the lack of available child-care was one of the reasons new Coasters leave the West Coast. One half of a couple would gain a job and the whole family would relocate. At some point the “trailing spouse” sought employment and found that she (usually) could not access child-care when and if she found a job. One West Coast mother said, “There’s a one-year waiting list for the local child-care centre and it’s open from 8:30-4:00.”

Early childhood education opening hours didn’t always match working patterns, with shift workers finding access to dependent care arrangements particularly challenging. In other cases, the cost of child-care is prohibitive.

“I used to end up losing $60 a week by the time I paid child-care – but I had to work to get ahead. People shouldn’t have to make that choice.”
People on low incomes, such as cleaners in the Hutt Valley and bank workers in Taranaki, said that the prohibitive cost of early childhood education meant that parents had to use informal arrangements or choose not to participate in the labour-force. A self-employed Wellington mother of two, Esther Livingston, in the National Conversation about Work introductory video said “the biggest impediment to equal opportunity at work is things like the cost of child-care. I personally think that if child-care was a tax deductible expense off the primary caregiver’s income, it would go a long way to making opportunities more accessible because opportunities is what it is all about.”

Currently the uptake of working arrangements developed to meet the needs of working families has a significant gender imbalance and emphasises the cultural norm that caring responsibility for children is primarily that of women. One rural woman said that for women in paid work “the pressure to keep the home fires burning may make it difficult for a woman to make the commitment required to climb the corporate ladder.”

Policies and practices can reinforce these assumptions, but could usefully be designed to promote equality. For example, men we spoke to in the National Conversation raised the unfairness of the lack of entitlement to Paid Parental Leave in their own right.

One father in the Bay of Plenty said that two weeks paid parental leave on the birth of a child for fathers would be great. He also proposed six months PPL for mothers followed by six months PPL for fathers. This would enable mothers to return to work and for fathers to be primary caregivers early in a child’s life.

Flexible work practices were often seen as a barrier to career advancement (the so-called Mummy track) and this discouraged men from taking up this option. One company in South Canterbury offered what workers called the “mother shift” 8:30am-2:30pm. Paradoxically the person who explained this to us was a father who worked the mother shift so he could be more actively involved in the lives of his children. The male kindergarten teachers we spoke to also challenged the notion of gender roles in relation to young children. “Men need to be invited and made welcome in early childhood centres. They need to know how fantastic the job is,” one of them said.

Incentivising EEO and diversity training was suggested by a Palmerston North human resource manager working in the private sector. A migrant to New Zealand himself, he said there was a “desperate need for diversity training in the workplace”, and believed that diversity training should include: boardroom thinking and culture, decision-making and problem-solving.
“There is a need for training of all sorts within companies. The Government should be offering tax breaks to companies that invest in training and that training should include equal employment opportunities.” In his native homeland, South Africa, companies that register with accredited training providers and can demonstrate that they have conducted annual training get back 80 per cent of the training dollars. “In some cases this had incentivised training in companies by 100 per cent. This should be legislated for in New Zealand.”

Pay equity

Groups of women, for example education support workers in Nelson, women lawyers in Christchurch and Tairawhiti DHB employees, expressed frustration at the lack of progress in achieving gender equality at work, including pay and employment equity. Those in the public sector had been part of the Five Year Plan of Action to review and address pay and employment equity. Reviews were conducted across the public sector but response plans developed from the findings of the reviews are yet to be fully implemented. An education support worker in Nelson told us, “I don’t begrudge cleaners and caretakers a pay rise, but the unfairness is blatant. A cleaner earns more vacuuming than a teacher’s aide who tube-feeds and catheterises a student.” A union organiser said “my son works at a petrol station for more pay than caregivers, with fewer responsibilities and no poos”.

A group of Canterbury women lawyers told us that they had to work twice as hard to be seen as equal and that if you asked to be paid at the same rate as men you were seen as “greedy, unreasonable and ungrateful”. “Nice girls don’t get the corner office (i.e. become a partner). You have to be ballsy, push your position and ask.”

There appears to be no systemic follow-up to review progress. The proposed roll out of the Pay and Employment Women into local government and the wider state sector (Phase 2) is voluntary and uptake has been extremely limited. The Chief Executive of the Gisborne District Council who undertook a pay and employment equity review said, “None of us set out to create injustices and inequality in our workplaces. Intuitively then, there’s no problem … however, I’ve realised it’s not enough to rely on intuition, hard data is needed.”

Discrepancies in starting salaries between men and women were found in many organisations in the state sector, in apparent breach of the Equal Pay Act. Women in the private sector advised us that this was also a problem for them. Lack of transparency about salaries, however, made it very difficult to raise awareness about pay inequality. There was little confidence in existing mechanisms to challenge gender pay inequalities.
“Women are strongly discouraged to discuss our salaries with one another. I have no way of knowing if a male in my position with the same experience makes more than me. I would prefer transparency and the sharing of knowledge. This would hold the Government to accountability and would bridge the 12 per cent pay gap. If I discovered I was making less, I would be incredibly disappointed and would work hard to rally my dept to be accountable and fair.”

Employees valued career opportunities and a number of businesses were proud of the opportunities given to employees to advance careers. In one Tauranga business everyone was expected to have a learning and development plan which included key accountabilities and expected behaviours to reach their goals. Plans were not necessarily related to work performance and included personal goals such as learning to drive. One worker said that in his workplace “there is no capped ceiling, no you can’t go there, the opportunities are endless.”

A feature of Māori businesses in particular was the commitment to providing career opportunities (such as support for further education) not just to build capacity in the company but to build capacity in the wider community, at an iwi level. “It’s just the rotation of life,” said one Southland employer, “we’re giving him his stepping stone.”

Low pay
Many participants identified fair pay as an important element of equality at work.

“I’d like to see my pay reflect the value I provide. My role is very senior as a Personal Assistant (PA) but because I don’t have staff reporting to me, I have hit a pay scale glass ceiling compared to other jobs which isn’t fair.”
Participants whose income was at or close to minimum wage levels talked about the difficulties they experienced making ends meet. One Rotorua man told us that the rising cost of electricity did not just have an impact on the cost of keeping warm but also on the cost of cooking. He told us that “fish and chips are cheaper” once the cost of shopping and cooking are factored in.

Being cold, combined with an inadequate diet and substandard accommodation contributed to poor health outcomes. Other participants said that staff on low wages seek longer work hours to gain an adequate income. Phyllis Puia, a cleaner, who was interviewed for the introductory video said, “I have seen some older people work two to three jobs to make ends meet. This has to stop.”

“In Nelson retail workers get paid $13 to $13.50 an hour and if they were in a bigger city they’d get closer to $17.00 an hour. But the cost of living is comparable. How do people live on that?”

Another participant said, “fair pay is a big issue for places like old people’s homes. Care staff get dreadful wages for the work they do.” Managers across industries as diverse as the aged care sector and horticulture told us that they had to monitor the hours staff were working, including for other employers, to ensure safe working practices.

Other people working in jobs paid at, or just above, the minimum wage felt the cost of tertiary study put their aspiration for career advancement out of reach. One father raising his child on a domestic purposes benefit had abandoned his nursing studies, because changes to the training incentive allowance policy meant he could no longer afford to study.

**Sexual orientation and gender diversity**

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity was raised by a number of participants. Gay and lesbian workers said that it was important that employers did not focus on being GLBTT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Takataapui) but on ensuring that the workplace is inclusive, that it is “OK to be who you are, no matter what.”
Another on-line participant said:

“Regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity workmates should be willing to accept diversity in the same way that discrimination against ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, disability and sex is completely unacceptable.” The culture of the workplace is critical. In some workplaces the tenor of comments and jokes makes it very clear that it is unsafe to be “out”.

**Transition from the labour market**

Almost every industry sector we spoke to identified the ageing workforce as a looming issue, but it became apparent that little sector planning was being done to address impending skill shortages. “This is a ticking time bomb,” said one economic development agency representative, with another indicating his region faces a “black hole between trade apprentices and older workers”. A manager in a Feilding meat-processing plant said “we’re very aware of the issue and there is increasing understanding that it is a problem but we’ve had less success in the industry in deciding what to do about it.”

A union secretary said the real question about older workers was, “how to let people step down and maintain dignity. Some of the older guys are struggling but they don’t want to be seen as weak … It’s a man thing.”
Some strategies to retain ageing workers were being considered, like flexible work arrangements and mentoring schemes using retired or semi-retired business people such as that brokered by the Tauranga Chamber of Commerce. However, we saw little evidence of systemic approaches being taken in a response to a looming demographic wave and labour market shortages.

We heard that conversations with older workers about their intentions and future options were difficult and avoided by employers for fear of being misconstrued as discriminatory. Former public servant, Quentin Doig, who also appeared in the National Conversation video, challenged employers and policy makers to identify “what are they doing about trying to keep people like me in senior management in employment”. Other older workers indicated that they had lost equity and assets underpinning their retirement savings and would therefore have to work beyond 65 years. For some older workers nearing retirement, for example at Marsden Point, staying connected to their former workplace was important because of social and emotional ties. A succession planning scheme has been developed in Otago called the Beyond Business Succession Planning Service. A programme advisor said “positive motivation is essential, so I also concentrate on getting the psychological and emotional barriers to succession planning sorted. Unlocking with that key makes a real difference.”

Older people we talked to in the course of the project who had retired from the paid workforce were often very active as unpaid workers (volunteers) in the community or supporting whānau. Wellingtonian Julie Dwyer, talking about her and husband Mike’s very busy day at Maraeora marae said “I had this fond sort of vision that we were retired and that we would just float out towards the sunset there and do whatever we liked when we liked. Ha ha. It didn’t work out like that at all.”

Older community volunteers in New Plymouth spoke of the impending crisis they see around the unaffordability of undertaking unpaid work. They said, “social services which rely on volunteers are feeling the pinch; funding is drying up and the cost of volunteering is becoming too expensive”, reducing the pool of volunteers. The costs for those on fixed budgets, including the cost of petrol and vehicle maintenance, meant people were losing the ability to contribute. It was felt the community would lose social capital and cohesion as a consequence.

“I am a volunteer fireman. The whole crucial volunteer sector is really under threat. The strain can be huge for employers who are trying to support the staff members’ absences with time and money when they are away. Most employers can’t afford it .... the whole thing could collapse.”
A Manawatu knitwear manufacturer described the ageing workforce as a “massive problem”. Some of its negative manifestations related to health and well-being, with sick pay being used up quickly, “weary bones and RSI”. On the positive side, the same manufacturer had an intensely loyal workforce.

Of the eight employees spoken to, five had worked for the company for more than 15 years, with one employee racking up 30 years as a machinist, one 25 years, and two at 20 years each. The workers, too, recognise the difficulties faced by an ageing workforce.

“If ten of us old ducks were to retire at the same time there would not be ten young ducklings to take our place.”

Professional women in Palmerston North who had recently retired spoke of the “tremendous culture shock” of being out of the paid workforce, similar to that faced by many professional men who fear the loss of identity and status when they retire. They spoke of “loss of self-esteem and the fact that what you do is bound up with who you are”. One woman asked: “Who am I when I don’t do what I once did?” Another said, “My whole life changed. It was like [having] an identity crisis.”

While one woman described her age group as the lucky generation in terms of retirement income from national superannuation, others said that interrupted careers meant that women had a much shorter time to build up retirement savings.

A group of Christchurch women talked about “granny work” and a group in South Auckland encouraged Pacific grandfathers to become involved in early childhood education. A group of women in Christchurch referred to a Norwegian scheme called “Grandfathers in kindergartens” which they thought sounded promising.

Other participants observed that older people were still actively engaged in the workforce well past traditional notions of retirement age. In Hawke’s Bay we met a supervisor of a gang of older seasonal workers, “grey gypsies”, who was himself in his eighties.

Everywhere in New Zealand there are examples both of inspirational older workers who have chosen to stay working and of others who have to work longer and would like different work conditions but are too afraid to ask. Employers are profoundly anxious about the implications of an ageing workforce and there remains an urgent need for sector-led active labour market strategies around retention and transition.
What employers told us

Many of the small and medium enterprises we spoke to, including migrant-owned businesses, are not formally networked to business agencies such as chambers of commerce or employers’ associations. This means they are reliant on either informal sources or professional services for advice about employment relations, anti-discrimination law and good employer issues.

“There’s been lots of change in legislation recently (breast feeding, flexi working). It’s easier for big companies to respond to this when they have resources, but smaller companies struggle to understand the legislation, the impacts and how to deal with it. Government could provide more accessible information and advice.”

Age is a dominant anxiety in many businesses around New Zealand. We heard again and again in different industrial sectors and across the regions about the issues relating to an ageing workforce. Whether it be succession planning for small business owners, older truck drivers, mentoring schemes in factories, or how to manage transitions to retirement, the ageing demographic of New Zealand’s labour market was firmly on the agenda. However, most businesses acknowledge they are neither actively planning for nor currently managing their ageing workforce.

“Government needs to provide leadership for the ageing population. Lead the way and demonstrate how to retain older people in work.”

At the other end of the spectrum some employers are strongly biased against young people because of their perceived attitudes to work and because of stereotypes about the youth work ethic. Some employers believe they have to make a much greater investment in younger people to get them up to speed. Youth unemployment is generally higher during periods of economic recession, but employers’ attitudes towards young people were a marked and worrying feature of the National Conversation about Work.
Employers want greater employment flexibility. The majority were in favour of the 90-day probationary period and some wanted to be able to roll over temporary contracts during the downturn because of the unpredictability of forward orders. Many employers were upset at new immigration criteria involving migrants who were having to reapply, and while businesses could understand the desirability of “Kiwis first”, they relied on the skills and availability of migrants for production.

“People don’t leave good jobs, they leave bad managers.” Both employers and employees raised a number of management issues with us throughout the project. Universally workers identify superior management with good communication, personal knowledge of employees and high-trust workplaces. Head office management perceived as being remote from workplace issues was criticised by both middle management and employees. Staff in one large Taranaki organisation stated that compulsory management training and mandatory refresher courses would improve the consistency of decision-making and management variability. One business owner also said that big private sector employers would benefit from the “good employer” obligations currently applied to the public sector.

There was a prevailing attitude among many managers, business owners and human resource specialists we spoke to that there was a lack of innovation and forward thinking around employment issues in New Zealand, whether that related to fringe benefit tax issues for small business or policy relating to performance management.

“It seems that employment legislation in NZ is now always about dealing with the problem, but not helping with the policy and how to avoid issues. Government needs to find a way to help employers deal with the two or three steps before a problem, not just legislate for the outcome.”
Recommendations

The following recommendations have been distilled from the conclusions of each regional report which were verified by participants in the National Conversation about Work. The recommendations are presented within the Right to Work framework, which includes a human rights approach to employment issues.

A human rights approach to employment involves:

- **Empowerment**: Empowers individuals and groups to have a voice in decision-making, by recognising their use of rights as a legitimate basis for action.

- **Accountability**: Introduces accountability for actions and decisions, which can allow individuals and groups to complain about decisions, policies and practices affecting them adversely.

- **Non-discrimination**: Seeks non-discrimination among individuals and groups through the equal enjoyment of rights and obligations by all individuals.

- **Participation**: Emphasises participation of individuals and groups in decision-making.

- **Agreed human rights norms**: Links decision-making to the agreed human rights norms as set out in the various human rights covenants and treaties.

Right to Work framework
From all the issues that were identified, recommendations that relate to furthering equal employment opportunities in New Zealand were developed. These are presented against the human rights approach to employment. This approach aims to:

- empower job-seekers and employers’ groups,
- improve accountability for equal employment opportunities,
- ensure non-discrimination in employment, and
- link legislation, policy and practice to the treaties and covenants New Zealand has ratified.

**Empowerment**

- Develop a national youth-to-work strategy that includes a plan for every young New Zealander, that has cross-party support and sufficient long-term funding security. The strategy must be responsive to the needs of Māori and Pacific youth as particularly vulnerable groups of young people.
- Improve the provision of labour market information and analysis at a regional and sub-regional level to enable Economic Development Agencies, local and central government agencies, employers and unions to share best practice and engage in medium to long-term regional employment strategies.

**Accountability**

- Develop Memoranda of Understanding as a partnership between the Human Rights Commission and business organisations to promote human rights at work, including information about anti-discrimination in employment.
- Review existing Equal Employment Opportunities legislation applying to both the public and private sector, including:
  - amending the Employment Relations Act 2000 to include a positive duty to be a good employer, and
  - strengthening the Equal Pay Act 1972 to improve effectiveness and to include equal pay for work of equal value.

**Non-discrimination**

**People with disabilities**
- Model good employment practice in the state sector through active EEO programmes that increase the number of people with disabilities employed in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Promote inclusive employment practice in the private sector through organisations such as the newly-formed Employers’ Disability Network.
- Make transparent the operation of minimum-wage exemptions, in consultation with the disability community.
- Provide guidance in partnership with people with experience of mental illness and other stakeholders on the disclosure of mental health issues to employers.

**Migrant workers**
- Provide information on employment law and human rights in relation to employment for both migrant employers and migrant employees in community languages (for example, Chinese and Filipino languages) and in multiple formats to ensure accessibility.
- Develop codes of practice in partnership with industry groups (for example, the dairy industry and the viticulture industry) to guide employers on best practice.
- Monitor the working conditions of migrant workers, including those employed under the RSE scheme, with a view to taking remedial action when poor practice is identified.
Participation

- Ensure that children of working parents have access to quality and affordable early childhood education in all areas of New Zealand, including provincial and rural communities and encourage men to consider careers in early childhood education.
- Extend paid parental leave for seasonal workers and men as primary entitlement holders.
- Develop a national programmatic approach on managing ageing workforce issues, including models of labour market participation for older workers, approaches to transition and succession strategies for small-business owners.

Agreed human rights and norms

- Progressively increase the level of both the minimum wage and benefit levels to ensure universal entitlement to an adequate standard of living. This requires indexing rates to the national average wage, as currently happens to national superannuation, and ensuring regular increases to improve income and to reduce inequality.
- Implement pay and employment equity strategies already developed by government departments in the public sector to eliminate the gender pay gap and actively promote pay equity in the private sector.
- Continue to sign, ratify and implement international labour standards, such as ILO and UN Conventions.
Top 10 Priorities for EEO

Sustainable and equitable job creation close to where New Zealanders live requires commitment from government, employers and workers. The top 10 priorities for action on equal employment opportunities summarises the recommendations:

1. **Disabled people**
   Increase the labour market participation of people with disabilities through active employment policies addressing attitudes, access to work and reasonable accommodation.

2. **Youth-to-work**
   Develop a national youth-to-work strategy that includes a plan for every young person in New Zealand, that has cross-party political support and long-term funding and is responsive to Māori and Pacific youth as particularly vulnerable groups.

3. **Migrant workers**
   Develop codes of practice in partnership with industry groups, in particular dairying and viticulture, to ensure fairness to migrants and to guide employers on best practice.

4. **Looking after the children**
   Ensure children have access to quality, affordable early childhood education in all areas of New Zealand, including active government policies to ensure coverage in provincial and rural communities.

5. **EEO across all sectors**
   Review existing equal employment opportunities legislation across the public and private sectors including amending the Employment Relations Act 2000 to include a positive duty to be a good employer.
Pay and employment equity
Implement pay and employment equity strategies already developed by the Department of Labour across the labour market and strengthen the Equal Pay Act 1972 to include equal pay for work of equal value.

Older workers
Urgently adopt a national programmatic approach managing ageing workforce issues, including models of labour market participation for older workers and transition strategies for different industry sectors.

Support for employers
Enhance guidance about the “good employer” and non-discrimination in employment through MOUs between business agencies and the Human Rights Commission.

Labour market information and analysis
Improve the provision of labour market information and analysis at a regional and sub-regional level to identify employment trends, including skill shortages, unemployment and industry sector needs.

Adequate standard of living
Progressively increase the level of both the minimum wage and benefit levels to ensure universal entitlement to an adequate standard of living.

Next steps

The next phase of the project will be to develop a new Equal Employment Opportunities framework. This will be based on the recommendations from the National Conversation about Work in consultation with stakeholders. We will be seeking further engagement with you as we move forward on a new EEO framework for New Zealand. Email your ideas to judym@hrco.co.nz

Making equality work

In the next section of the report, twelve inspiring examples of equality in workplaces are described. These innovations are informed by a Kiwi ‘can–do’ attitude alongside a commitment to fairness and equality. They are part of the fabric of decent and productive work in New Zealand.

The following twelve examples are just some of the good ideas we saw. The organisations featured here have agreed to share their innovation and provide contact details.
Making Equality Work
T Rusting people power

‘Staff participation is a proven way to foster better organisational results’. That’s the mission of electricity company TrustPower in the Bay of Plenty that has a staff committee with a difference and more power than most.

TrustPower has formalised an employees’ staff committee. Its purpose is to act on behalf of employees to provide input into activities for the betterment of employees’ economic, environmental and social needs. The committee is ratified by a formal charter endorsed and signed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

TrustPower’s committee comprises up to ten members. Around eight members are elected annually through nomination by employees. The nominated employees must represent, on balance, the interests of all TrustPower employees across business teams. In addition, two management representatives are appointed by the CEO.

**FACT:** Obtaining staff participation in the process to analyse employment areas and address any concerns raised is critical to ensuring that the right issues are addressed and the most effective changes are made.

‘Good employers’ ensure that they engage with staff. Issues and concerns cannot be fully known unless employers consult with their staff. To engage everyone, it is critical to ensure that the organisation has a well developed system or process for consultation and information-exchange between and among workers. When employees are ‘engaged’ they are more likely to speak positively of the organisation to others, to apply their best efforts to their work, and want to remain part of the organisation.

**Benefits of increased staff participation and engagement:**

- Encourages the development of ideas and worker innovation.
- Provides the opportunity for employees to participate in decision-making.
- Enables employees to share responsibility for action.

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Growing Māori leaders

‘It’s no secret: great leaders know where they are going and how they will get there’. Wakatū Incorporated, a Māori-owned business collective based in Nelson, has an Associate Directors Scheme to ensure a steady pool of talent at the top through mentorship.

The long-term goal of Wakatū’s Associate Directors Scheme is to grow the next generation of governance through whakapapa (genealogy), and encourage ‘young blood’ into the Wakatū boardroom. Shareholders and whānau are given the opportunity to gain experience in the governance of Wakatū Incorporation, with a view to them becoming nominees for future board elections.

The complexity of Wakatū businesses, seven in total, means it is vital that future directors are equipped with the necessary commercial skills and understanding of the history and peoples of Te Tau Ihu.

Associate Directors are appointed for two years – the first year on a Sector Board and the second on the Head Board – but have no formal voting powers. The Associate Directors Scheme has a strong mentoring focus, with associates being guided by existing board members. Former Associate Directors have become full Directors on the Wakatū Board.

FACT: Governance plays a key role in business performance. Fair representation of diverse groups on boards is widely regarded as improving the “triple” bottom line. Successful Māori businesses are developing their own successors.

In New Zealand there are too few women, Māori, Pacific people, people with disabilities and other ethnic groups at governance level. Effective succession planning can greatly assist businesses through strategic, systematic and deliberate efforts to ensure readiness, retention and recruitment of future governance talent.

Benefits of developing your own leaders:
✓ Helps potential leaders understand the key functions of a board.
✓ Gives young and talented professionals greater access to the boardroom and boardroom responsibilities.
✓ Ensures succession planning at governance level of companies.

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Maturing mentors

‘Mentoring can be critical in helping to retain institutional knowledge through strong relationships.’ The New Zealand Refining Company at Marsden Point recognises that older members of the workforce represent a valuable resource of knowledge and experience which could potentially be lost as these employees leave the company’s service.

The refinery’s Mentors’ Scheme aims to link younger employees in the company with the years of knowledge and experience held by its long-serving retiring employees. It offers retiring employees the opportunity to voluntarily play a role in developing the company’s current employees.

Refinery mentors provide mentoring, practical support and skills development to new and/or inexperienced employees, in technical areas where the passing on of practical knowledge and experience has the potential to add significant value and/or accelerate the development of essential skills.

Too few businesses have implemented practices to capture institutional knowledge or to transfer the knowledge of older workers to younger workers. It is assumed that ‘people pass things along’ but the amount of information that people personally hold is underestimated by most businesses. The rapidly ageing workforce requires that active retention of institutional knowledge is required to ensure business sustainability.

FACT: Retaining the skills and knowledge of older and retiring workers is critical as the working population ages in New Zealand.

Benefits of mentoring:
✓ Helps both the mentor and the recipient recognise their abilities and limitations.
✓ Motivates improved career development policies and practices.
✓ Aids better communication skills and interaction between colleagues.

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Wonderful Wāhine

‘Disconnected youth and young adults who are neither in school nor in the labour force are at risk of becoming permanently disengaged from the labour market.’ Whakatu Marae’s Wonderful Wāhine youth-to-work programme in Nelson aims to keep young Māori girls at school longer.

The programme is now in its fourth year and has an annual intake of around 30 participants. Whakatu Marae in partnership with Nayland College, Nelson, has designed the programme to keep girls at school longer. The programme allows young girls to share their aspirations with others, look at career opportunities, build new relationships and listen to what other young role models have to say. The programme also gives participants the unique opportunity to learn from the experiences of their Kuia.

Participants find they have better social interaction with peers, whānau and community after the programme. Relationships with teachers, school counsellors and the school are also strengthened as a result and girls remain at school for longer.

Disengaged youth that are neither in school nor the labour market are unable to contribute meaningfully to their own lives, family, the economy and wider community. This represents a great waste of resources and human potential.

FACT: Increased levels of education have contributed to employment but in 2009 Māori youth aged 15–24 years had one of the highest rates of unemployment.

Benefits of a successful youth-to-work programme:

✓ Provides successful transition from school to tertiary education, vocational training and work leading to better life-long outcomes.

✓ Encourages young people to become engaged and active in their communities.

✓ Helps satisfy the growing demand for entry level and lower skilled workers in New Zealand.

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Incubating future health professionals

‘Incubator programmes provide supportive environments for increased growth.’ Hawke’s Bay District Health Board has pioneered Programme Incubator which aims to motivate secondary school students into choosing a career in health. The programme has expanded to include a further five District Health Boards.

The programme is specifically designed to target young people from communities who are under-represented in health professions. The programme takes a whole workforce approach to health.

Year 12 and 13 students from lower decile schools with a high proportion of Māori and Pacific students experience six sessions of hands-on learning which includes meeting various health professionals and hearing about their work-lives. Work experience in health enables interested students to spend a day alongside a health professional.

The learning methodology is not to tell students about health careers but to be highly experiential, providing the “feel” for working in the health sector. The District Health Board also assists students by providing vacation employment. Students can also choose to stay in touch electronically through purposefully designed online discussions.

It is hoped Programme Incubator will contribute to regional retention of skills in the health sector or enable those who have experienced the incubator to return to the Hawke’s Bay region. A recent incubator participant wrote, “I’m convinced I’ve won the jackpot, nothing gets better than this. Joining the incubator programme was one of the biggest decisions I’ve made. I would recommend joining this programme to everyone who is thinking about pursuing a job in the health area. The incubator changed my attitude to school, to my career choice and to my future.”

FACT: New Zealand is critically short of skilled practitioners across all areas of health, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, technicians and social service providers.

Benefits of an incubator programme:
✓ Provides legitimacy in the community and encourages trained professionals to return to the province they came from.
✓ Addresses labour shortages in the health care sector.
✓ Provides experiential, hands-on learning experiences for young people making career choices.

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Numeracy and literacy training leads to improvements

‗Numeracy and literacy skills are important factors in the success of individuals and businesses‘. Hamilton’s Longveld Engineering has a strong belief in developing the potential of their migrant employees.

Longveld have piloted an English language programme suited to its industry in an effort to improve business outcomes and support migrant staff. Initially the company thought the programme would target only migrants but soon realised that Kiwi staff may also need help and benefit from the programme.

Employees receive 1.5 hours of numeracy/literacy training on-site each week. Activities include filling in workplace forms, matching safety signs with words, and simple numeracy skills. Components of a national certificate in occupational safety and health (OSH) have also been included in the programme.

Longveld is very satisfied with the programme and says it has improved morale and communication. Benefits to the company included migrant participants of the programme now training other junior staff. Managers and staff in the business say that migrant participants in the programme have improved “out of sight” and that “their enthusiasm for their work has lifted dramatically”.

FACT: Elevating literacy and numeracy levels delivers benefits beyond increased workplace productivity, which repays the industry sector costs, improves skills development and increases workplace commitment.

Benefits of increased numeracy and literacy skills at work:
✓ Assists on-the-job task completion rates and helps improve performance.
✓ Leads to the employee becoming more involved in workplace communications and problem solving.
✓ Helps the learner in every part of their life, not just in the workplace.

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Recruiting positively

‘Recruitment plays a critical role in ensuring you have the right people, with the right skills at the right time.’ The Airways Corporation, a Christchurch-based, State Owned Enterprise, has a strong commitment to diversity when recruiting.

Air traffic control has traditionally been a male-dominated occupation but in recent years, through targeted advertising and training intakes, 30 per cent of controllers are female. Ensuring diversity in this field is a challenge because of the perceptions of air traffic control – in particular it being a stressful and aggressive working environment.

Advertising that portrays air traffic control as a fun and stimulating career has helped attract more female applicants. The focus has been on the need for clear communication skills, good numeracy and spatial skills, and the ability to stay calm under stress.

Controller roles are often inaccessible to people with disabilities because of international civil aviation standards requiring controllers to have regular familiarisation flights in the cockpit of commercial aircraft and stringent medical requirements. The Airways Corporation is consulting with Workbridge on how to actively encourage people with disabilities into areas of the aviation industry where they can be accommodated.

FACT: Good recruitment practice should implement an impartial, transparent employment process with no barriers or biases to employing the best person for the job. Positive initiatives are required to attract people with disabilities into the workplace.

Benefits of good recruitment:
✓ Publicly demonstrates the “face” of a workplace to prospective employees, current employees, clients and other businesses in the industry.
✓ Attracts the right type of people and equal employment opportunities remove barriers of entry and access for disadvantaged groups.
✓ Minimises legal risks in employment and discrimination law.

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Succeeding beyond business

"Succession is the successful exit from a business." Dunedin’s Beyond Business Succession Planning Service aims to maximise the economic impact of business succession and retain maximum value in businesses where key owners/managers are considering exiting. It is one of the few regional proactive initiatives in ensuring New Zealand’s small and medium-enterprise owners do not quit their businesses at the same time.

'Beyond Business' is a joint venture between key Dunedin business advisory professionals (accountants and lawyers), the Economic Development Unit of the Dunedin City Council and the Otago Chamber of Commerce.

According to research, many business owners procrastinate when it comes to succession planning and are unable to confidently answer basic questions such as:

- Do you know when and how you want to exit your business?
- Are you getting on well with the putting in place of a succession planning process that will make the most of your business for you and your family down the track?
- Do you know what you will do when you move on from your business?
- Do you know how to identify and engage with the quality of succession planning expertise that will most benefit you and your family when the time comes?

Succession planning is a necessary part of an organisation’s ability to reduce risk, create a proven leadership model, smooth business continuity and improve staff morale.

**FACT:** In March 2010, there were 995,900 older people (aged 55 and over) in New Zealand, 43.7 per cent of who were in the labour force. Significant numbers of New Zealand business owners in this age group are looking to exit their businesses over the next 5-10 years.

Beyond Business provides an impartial mentoring service to help business owners overcome the “personal procrastination barriers” that delay the development of their succession planning with professional business advisors. Beyond Business is currently working with around 70 active clients, of which around 20 per cent will look to exit their businesses in the next two years.

**Benefits of succession planning:**
- Assists owners explore succession issues and business transition concerns.
- Helps sustain small and medium businesses in New Zealand, including the employment opportunities they offer.

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Flexible foodies

‘Flexible work arrangements allow access to greater work life balance.’ Foodstuffs in Rotorua has come up with an unusual spin on flexible work hours which are generally more easily accommodated in professional environments or office work than in the service and distribution areas.

Inspired by staff who wanted later, more flexible, start times, employees at the distribution centre can choose to start work at 6.00am, 7.00am or 8.00am, and do an eight-hour day from whichever start time they choose. Staff can vary their start times throughout the week to suit their needs. “Most people start at 6.00am but for working parents childcare facilities don’t open until 7.30am.”

Management at the distribution centre believe “15-20 per cent or more” staff use the flexible start arrangements. “Some of our best workers are mothers and women returning to work. This helps them, and ultimately helps us”, plant management say.

FACT: Increasingly employees are looking for flexibility to help balance and integrate their work with family demands while employers need to maintain production targets and enhance productivity.

There are two key elements to flexible working arrangements. Employers agree that hours and/or place of work are other than the traditional 40-hour week worked Monday to Friday and employees have some ability to choose, negotiate or request specific work arrangements.

Benefits of increased flexibility:
✓ Allows staff to better accommodate family demands.
✓ Helps employers to gain more flexibility from their employees when needed.
✓ Attracts prospective staff and is good for a company’s reputation.

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Whaling highlights Tikanga

‘Māori values are instrumental in defining a Māori organisation, maintaining cultural and ethical standards, giving direction, and provide a point of difference in the global market place.’ At Whalewatch Kaikoura this benefits employees and the wider community.

Whalewatch Kaikoura is an award-winning South Island company with its roots firmly embedded in tikanga Māori. Tikanga Māori business models are based on a much longer time horizon than is apparent in other businesses. They have a firm commitment to sustainability and the environment. They also focus more readily on whānau and, in the case of Whalewatch, the benefits to the wider community of Kaikoura.

At Whalewatch there is a strong emphasis on capacity building and professional development opportunities for staff. Captains of vessels are sent away to obtain their licences with full pay and all expenses paid for. The Whalewatch philosophy is to provide off-season training for committed staff who work hard.

FACT: To maintain cultural integrity and identify advantages for Māori business in the national and global marketplace, it is important to understand the role of Māori culture in a contemporary business environment.

Benefits of Māori values in business:
✓ Integrates the importance of Māori cultural values with business practice.
✓ Contributes positively to the development of a point of difference for export products and services in the global marketplace.

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Launching students

‘Youth employment is a major issue in New Zealand and launching young people into work is critical to improving the situation.’ Launchpad in Dunedin is a progressive and exciting non-profit employment initiative. The Employment Scholarship Trust formed Launchpad in 1997 in response to the difficulties facing New Zealand’s young people and the nation’s employers.

Launchpad provides a unique solution that helps mainly female school leavers into a professional administrative career and minimises the employment risks faced by today’s business world.

Year 12 and 13 school leavers are given the opportunity of one year’s full-time paid work as an office junior combined with free study leading to a certificate in business administration.

The scheme matches up school leavers with employers, and the young people, mostly women, are supported and mentored during the year to ensure the placement is a success.

FACT: Launchpad and work readiness programmes are a way to prepare young people for a working future and showcase their talents in work experience to prospective employers.

Benefits of youth to work programmes:

✓ Allows employers to trial and spot talent.
✓ Encourages participation and provides a launch-pad for youth who need it.
✓ Assists in the successful transition from education to work.

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Young workers ski towards successful careers

‘Companies that actually crack how to work with Generation Y will be hugely successful.’ Award-winning South Island skiing company NZSki seems to have cracked an employment issue that has eluded many other New Zealand employers.

NZSki encourages its mainly Generation Y employees, aged 18-30 years, to look out for each other, to achieve better results through ‘co-operating interdependently’, to take responsibility, to be purpose-driven, to be highly motivated and team-spirited.

The business has embarked on a project to attract and retain young staff by better understanding their motivations and needs. Management at NZSki have worked hard to find out what motivates Generation Y and how to retain them, including analysing their career aspirations. As a result the company has introduced career development initiatives and support for staff to gain nationally recognised qualifications.

The benefits of NZSki’s approach are already apparent in its staff retention and engagement rates. A new company culture has allowed for innovative changes, including; a revised transport service for guests and staff, better and more cost effective meals for staff, and healthier lifestyles for staff, including gym memberships and more time on the slopes.

Gen Y workers themselves praise the changes NZSki has made. “It really looked and felt like NZSki wanted to help us become the best that we can be, both for ourselves and our customers. It’s very reassuring to know that you’re involved in a company that supports training and growth, and, more importantly, values you as a person.”

FACT: Employers who can motivate Generation Y, aged between 18 and 30 years, will have a greater competitive staffing advantage than others.

Benefits of employing Generation Y:

✓ Helps alleviate concerns associated with workforce planning and the ageing population.

✓ Utilises youthful dynamism and innovation within business, including opportunities for the introduction of greater technologies.

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We would like to thank all our National Conversation about Work contacts and participants. The following list records contacts throughout the country who both participated and organised the involvement of other groups.

- Adam Buckingham, Online participant
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- AgResearch – Crown Research Institute, Christchurch
- AgResearch – Crown Research Institute, Hamilton
- Agworks Labour Supply, Te Awanga, Hawke’s Bay
- Airways Corporation, Christchurch
- Alastair Adam, Venture Southland, Invercargill
- Alison Wardle, Online participant
- Amanda Hunt, Online participant
- AMI Insurance, Taupo
- Amokura – Family Violence Prevention Consortium, Northland
- Angela Jacobson, Online participant
- Animation Research Limited, Dunedin
- Anne Broome, Online participant
- Anthony Fowler, Oyster boat skipper, Bluff
- Aotearoa Seafoods, Blenheim
- Apata Centrepac, Tauranga
- Art Deco Trust, Napier
- Arthur Ana, Councillor, Manukau City Council
- ASB Bank, Taupo
- Association of Blind Citizens, Wellington
- AUT students, Auckland
- B. Jammin Surf & Streetwear, Taupo
- Barkers, Geraldine, South Canterbury
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- Belinda Pilcher, Wellington
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- Bill Dalwood, Online participant
- Bluestar taxis, Christchurch
- Bridget Robson and Jordan Waiti, Te Rōpu Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare , Otago School of Medicine, Wellington
- Bryce Mason, Wellington
- Business and Professional Women, Southland
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- Cambridge Stud, Waikato
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- Canterbury Software Cluster, Christchurch
- Canvastand, Levin
- Career Connexion, Gisborne
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- CCS Action, Wellington
- Cedenco, Gisborne
- Central Hawke’s Bay District Council, Waipawa
- Chair of the TSB Community Trust, New Plymouth
- Chairperson New Zealand Farmers Markets, Blenheim
- Chamber of Commerce, Cambridge
- Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton
- Chelvi Don Silva, Wellington
- Chris Peters, Wellington
- Citizens Advice Bureau, Queenstown
- CMP (Meat processing) Ashburton
- Community Law Centre, Invercargill
- Community Living Trust, Hamilton
- Compass Fruits Ltd, Richmond
- Contact Energy, Clyde
- Dairy Workers Union, Edendale, Southland
- Daleen Pienaar, Online participant
- Dana Rose (Painter), Nelson
- Darna Appleyard, Online participant
- Dave Stewart, Wellington
- David Appleton, Employment lawyer
- Deaf Aotearoa, Napier
- Des Ngaheu, Mountain View Rigging Scaffold and Labour Hire, Kawerau
- Devonport Naval Base, Auckland
- Dianne Black, Online participant
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- Disabled Persons Assembly (DPA) Taranaki, New Plymouth
- DPA and People First Head Office, Wellington
- Duncan Leask (Sculptor), Nelson
- Dunedin City Council, Dunedin
- Dynamic Controls, Christchurch
- EEO practitioners' meeting, Christchurch (co-hosted with EEO Trust)
- EEO practitioners' meeting, Wellington
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- Enterprise Lake Taupo, Taupo
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- Enterprise Northland, Whangarei
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- Filipino community, Ashburton
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- Focus group migrant Chinese, Auckland
- Focus group New Zealand-born Chinese, Auckland
- Foodstuffs, Rotorua
- Frana Cardno, Mayor Southland District Council, Gore
- Fresh FM, Nelson
- Gabrielle Ekman, Wellington
- Garth Armstrong, Wellington
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- GDM Group Security, Whanganui
- Gerry Forde, Family South, Invercargill
- Gilltrap Farm Machinery, Ot-rohanga
- Gisborne District Council, Gisborne
- Gisborne Girls High School, Gisborne
- Gisborne Herald, Gisborne
- Graeme Crossman, Chief Executive, Kiwi360, Te Puke
- Group of Christchurch women lawyers, Christchurch
- Hamills Adventure Store, Invercargill
- Hastings District Council, Hastings
- Hawke’s Bay District Health Board Programme Incubator, Hukarere College Eskdale, Napier
- Hawke’s Bay Fruitgrowers Association, Hastings
- Hawke’s Bay Wine Country Tourism Association, Napier
- Hawthorne Coffee Roasters, Havelock North
- Heather Brownlee, seasonal worker and paid parental leave advocate, Brightwater
- Heather Douglas, Business Owner, Auckland
- Helen Stewart, Kawerau Enterprise Agency, Kawerau
- Heywood Orchards, Riwaka
- Holly Bacon, Hastings
- IHC Advocacy, Wellington
- Ingham Honda, Ot-rohanga
- Inglis Horticulture Ltd, Tasman
- Inia Curry, Youth Worker, Kawerau
- Irwin’s Tools, Wellsford
- Jade Software, Christchurch
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- Julie Dwyer, Wellington
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- Kahurangi Trust, Nelson
- Kapu Waretini, Wellington
- Karen Smith, Wellington
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- Keith Weir Motors, Hamilton
- Kerifresh, Kerikeri
- Kerikeri Business Network of 25 SMEs, Kerikeri
- Kevin Winter, Mayor, Rotorua
- Kia Kaha Clothing, Wellington
- Kidsfirst Kindergarten teachers and administrators, Christchurch
- Kintail Honey, Takapau
- Kristin Hansson, Online participant
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Land Information New Zealand, Hamilton
Launchpad, Dunedin
LeaderBrand, Gisborne
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Living Nature, Kerikeri
Longveld Engineering, Hamilton
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Lynette Haines, Online participant
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Manawatu Knitting Mills, Palmerston North
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Maritime Union New Zealand, Nelson
Marlborough Express, Blenheim
Marlborough Regional Development Trust, Blenheim
Marlborough Regional Wine Centre, Blenheim
Marlborough Wine Industry Representatives, Blenheim
Mare Group, Wanganui
Martine Abel, Manukau City Council, Manukau City
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Mayor Queenstown, Clive Geddes
Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, Waipu
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Mighty River Power, Kawerau
Migrant community, Timaru
Migrant Workers, Ashburton, South Canterbury
Mike Dwyer, Wellington
Migrant Settlement Services, New Plymouth
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National Council of Women (Manawatu Branch), Palmerston North
Nelson Arts Council, Nelson
Nelson City Council, Manager Community Policy and Planning, Nelson
Nelson City Council, Nelson
Nelson Mail, Nelson
Nelson Regional Economic Development Agency, Nelson
Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce, Nelson
Nephi Prime, Tauranga Moana Māori Tourism, Tauranga
Neudorf Wines, Motueka
New Life New Zealand, Hamilton
New Plymouth Boys High School, New Plymouth
New Plymouth District Positive Ageing Council, New Plymouth
New Plymouth Girls High School, New Plymouth
New World, Wairoa
New Zealand (Upper Moutere) Potters Regional Group, Nelson
New Zealand Aluminium Smelter Rio Tinto, Ti Wai Point
New Zealand Army, Waiouru
New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Women’s Conference, Wellington
New Zealand Dairy Workers Union, Eltham, Taranaki
New Zealand Defence Force (Navy)
- New Zealand Kindergartens Conference, Wellington
- New Zealand Nurses Association, Wellington
- New Zealand Police, Northland
- New Zealand Student Union Association, Wellington
- Ngai Tahu Holdings, Christchurch
- Ngati Hine Health Trust, Whangarei
- Northland Regional Corrections Facility, Nga Wha
- Nuku Rapana, Auckland
- NUPE delegates in NGOs, Greymouth
- NZ Federation of Graduate Women, Auckland
- NZ Ski Limited, Queenstown
- NZEI Education Support Workers, Nelson
- NZEI national women’s group, Wellington
- Oceana Gold, Reefton
- Opportunity Hamilton
- Osler’s Bakery, Wairoa
- Otago Chamber of Commerce, Dunedin
- Otago Forward – Economic Development Agency, Dunedin
- Otorohanga Trade Training Centre, Otorohanga
- Out at Work (Council of Trade Unions), Christchurch
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- Pacific community representatives, South Auckland
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- Phyllis Puia, Wellington
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- Port of Tauranga, Tauranga
- Port Taranaki, New Plymouth
- Portside Hotel, Gisborne
- Practicall Education Institute, New Plymouth
- PSA members Department of Conservation, Greymouth
- PSA members Grey Base Hospital, Greymouth
- Public Service Association, Wellington
- QE Health, Rotorua
- Queenstown Chamber of Commerce, Queenstown
- Queenstown Hotels Council, Queenstown
- Quentin Doig, Wellington
- Raewyn Barclay, Safer Community Council, Ashburton
- Rata Te Awhina, Hokitika
- Refinery Gallery, Nelson
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- Richard Brookings, Consultant, Gisborne
- Richard Kinzett Priority One Tauranga
- Rick Cooper, Mayor Taupo
- Rob Brawley, Grow Canterbury, Ashburton
- Robyn DeBruin-Judge, Auckland
- Rodney Economic Development Trust, Orewa
- Roger Gordon, CEO, Rotorua Chamber of Commerce, Rotorua
- Ross Whillock (Painter), Nelson
- RSE workers Marlborough, Blenheim
- Rural Women Bay of Plenty
- Rural Women South Waikato, Otorohanga
- Rural Women, Southland
- Safe Air Limited, Blenheim
- Sanfords, Bluff
- Service Food and Workers’ Union (SFWU), Lower Hutt
- Sealords, Nelson
- Shell Todd Oil Services Ltd (STOS), New Plymouth
- Silver Fern Farms, Dunedin
- Simon Worthington and Amy Marshall, Canterbury Development Corporation
- Sir James Lodge, Cambridge
- Skyline Skyrider, Rotorua
- South Canterbury District Health Board, Timaru
- Southern Steel Netball, Invercargill
- Southland Disability Enterprises Incorporated
- Southland Times, Invercargill
- Southport, Bluff
- Sports Gisborne, Gisborne
- Steve Canny, Venture Southland, Invercargill
- Strata Plastics, Hamilton
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- Suzanne Bateup (Textile artist), Nelson
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- Tamaki Tours, Rotorua
- Taranaki District Health Board, New Plymouth
- Taupo District Council, Taupo
- Taupo Moana Group, Taupo
- Taupo Music Shop, Taupo
- Te Unga Mai, Gisborne
- Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, Whakatane
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- Thames Coromandel District Council
- The Boardroom, Wainui Beach, Gisborne
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- Toll United, Whangarei
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- Tracy Hicks, Mayor, Gore District Council
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- Tui Ora Limited, New Plymouth
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  - Wairoa High School, Wairoa
  - Wanganui Chamber of Commerce, Whanganui
  - Wanganui Economic Development Agency, Whanganui
  - Wanganui Security, Whanganui
  - Wendy Smith, Aoraki Development Corporate, Timaru
  - West Coast Development Trust, Greymouth
  - West Coast Disability Information Network, Greymouth
  - Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT), New Plymouth
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  - Whakatu Marae, Nelson
  - Whale Watch, Kaikoura
  - Whangarei District Council, Whangarei
  - Whitcoulls, Taupo
  - Wild South Clothes
  - Willy Ransfield and Natalie Rogers, Design Studios, Havelock North
  - Women in Leadership group, Lincoln University, Christchurch
  - Workbridge, Nelson
  - Wyn Hunia, Kawerau Conservation Corps, Kawerau
  - Young Māori public sector professionals, Wellington
  - Zespri International, Tauranga
  - Zonta International District 16 Conference, Wellington
The National Conversation about Work
Regional Reports
www.neon.org.nz
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