



Northland primary sector employers want to employ locals

- They want to support the community and give local people a better quality of life.
- Tai Tokerau has natural competitive advantages for primary sector businesses to grow.
- Some local people have a desire to remain in the region for work. Primary sector employers face barriers when it comes to employing Northland people.



“We’ve got a strong sense of community and there’s a strong desire to give the locals the opportunity. You want to build up and strengthen your community.”

Research Participant.

The Research

As a project within the *Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan*, the Mid to Far North Primary Industries Employer Research project explored primary sector employers’ barriers to, and opportunities for, accessing the local workforce. The research was independently carried out by Research NZ, commissioned by the Ministry for Primary Industries.

302 Northland primary industry employers completed a survey and up to 30 were involved in focus groups – the research findings are the views of primary industry employers.

The research made recommendations for action as a result of the findings and now requires a multi-agency approach to address the challenges.

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The findings

What employers told us was valuable insight, and now a collaborative approach is essential to address the findings. The report confirms some things we expected; the opportunities are vast, and the challenges are difficult and complex. But most importantly, employers want everyone to join the dots to make it easier to access services for business growth and for the development of the local workforce.

For the full research report and findings, please visit www.mpi.govt.nz/regionalgrowth

The key things employers told us fit within the themes of improving capability of employers, education and training, marketing of the primary sectors and the employability of local labour force.

In summary, the report told us employers need:

- Greater support around employment rights and compliance.
- More accessible and affordable training for employees as well as supported apprenticeship/cadetship schemes.
- Business and strategy support to overcome barriers to business growth.
- Long term investment in infrastructure like broadband, roading and shipping.
- Improvements to the relevance and effectiveness of education and training in the region.
- Support for industry to articulate the changing workforce demands for the sector into the future.

- Easier access for employers to services such as driver licencing assistance, numeracy and literacy assistance and personal development.
- More promotion of primary industry career pathways in schools.
- Greater access to social support services in Northland.

The findings have and will continue to steer design and decision making for future projects within the *Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan*.

What next

The overall finding is that employers want support and advocacy from MPI, in conjunction with other relevant agencies, and the education sector, in order to facilitate business performance (especially compliance-related), promote the primary industries, improve training outcomes and, ultimately, invest in business growth and development and infrastructure in the region.

A number of recommendations for action have been identified in the report, which can be found at www.mpi.govt.nz/regionalgrowth

These are broken down in to short-to-medium term and long term priorities. To make these happen, co-ordination, communication and action across multiple agencies is key.

The *Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan* is the platform to drive change.

Getting involved

The *Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan* is focused on creating new opportunities for Northlanders. It's about creating more jobs and better outcomes for local people and businesses, and in turn, all of New Zealand.

If you want to get involved in a current project, or have new ideas, then talk to the Portfolio Manager for the *Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan* today!

More info can be found at www.northlandnz.com/business/ttneap

