

Careers Expo aims to help meet fast-growing workforce requirements

The construction, engineering and trades sectors are currently experiencing a range of skill shortages, but the New Zealand-wide Careers Expo aims to help by engaging with the future workforce to meet employment requirements.

Increased demand for workers in construction, engineering and trades is being fuelled by the Canterbury rebuild, large roading and infrastructure projects, a recovering commercial building sector and Auckland Council's plans to ensure 39,000 additional residential houses are consented over the next three years.

However, there is a shortage of workers in many of the areas required to meet the requirements of these sectors. "The building industry alone needs 5000 new skilled tradespeople, and that figure omits related trades such as scaffolders, gasfitters or those skilled in air-conditioning," says Mark Gillard, Careers Expo director.

"The Careers Expo provides an ideal platform to engage with young people entering the job market in New Zealand, inform them about the possible career paths available, and recruit them into apprenticeships and on-the-job training programmes to make sure those future skills requirements are met," he adds.

ADDRESSING SKILL SHORTAGES

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment forecasts that employment in the construction and utilities industries will grow at 2.6% per year between 2011 and 2016, compared to total employment growth of 1.6%. No other major industry group is expected to grow this fast, Mr Gillard says.

"A lack of suitably skilled employees available to meet employment requirements can hamper the effectiveness of an organisation in a multitude of ways, and on a wider industry level can restrict economic growth," he comments. "It is crucial that businesses



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and industry address both short and long-term skill shortages. Identifying skills requirements and investing in the training and upskilling of young New Zealanders entering the workforce will help solve employment issues now and in years to come."

The Careers Expo presents the widest range of exhibitors of any careers expo in New Zealand. Comprising employers, tertiary providers, training institutions, industry representatives, government departments and corporates, it provides organisations with the opportunity to connect directly with tomorrow's workforce, and presents employment and career information and guidance to prospective employees.

"Large and small employers can make a difference by ensuring they are planning for the future and identifying and communicating jobs skills needed in the next three to 10 years," Mr Gillard explains. "They can help themselves address the country's skills shortages through direct involvement or supporting industry organisations in face-to-face engagement opportunities with

future talent. That's a win-win for everyone."

ABOUT THE CAREERS EXPO

Each year, tens of thousands of New Zealand youth and hundreds of schools attend the Careers Expos across the country to engage directly with the experts that can advise them on their career and transition aspirations, including employers, industry bodies, tertiary and training providers, and service and support groups.

Admission is free for all visitors, and the 2015 events will take place in Christchurch, Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington, from May to June:

- Christchurch 7-9 May: Horncastle Arena (formally CBS Arena)
- Auckland 28-30 May: ASB Showgrounds, Greenlane
- Hamilton 7-8 June: Claudelands Event Centre
- Wellington 28-29 June: TSB Arena, Queens Wharf

careersepo.org.nz

Youth Guarantee scheme proving successful for Pasifika students

A multi-agency programme led by the Ministry of Education is helping thousands of young New Zealanders earn higher qualifications and brighter prospects for the future.

Youth Guarantee initiatives are about improving the transition from school to work by providing a wider range of learning opportunities, making better use of the education network and creating clear pathways from school to tertiary study, training and work.

Twins Nanumea and Te Pine Foua, of Tokelauan descent, are Year 13 graduates from St Patrick's College in Silverstream, Upper Hutt, having achieved NCEA Level 3 credits thanks to hard work, interesting subject choices and time spent 'on the job'.

Te Pine says he wanted "a solid plan" for after school, so early in Year 11 he went to the Careers New Zealand website and looked up the skill shortages in the current labour market. He identified construction and plumbing as a good starting point.

As a result, Te Pine, with the help of his career advisor, adjusted his subject choices to fit this sector, and he interviewed and got applicable work placements. He did a combination of domestic plumbing as well as two weeks on a large, commercial construction site, all of which earned him credits.

"It confirmed that I really wanted to do plumbing in the future," Te Pine says, adding that the work placements were quite different to being in school. "There was no one chasing you up. It was up to me to make the placement a success. It made me want to come to school afterwards. I wouldn't have tried as hard otherwise."

KEEPING STUDENTS AT SCHOOL LONGER

Rector Gerard Tully from St Patrick's College says that work placement offerings and tailored curricula which include a wide and more relevant choice with better links to industry are helping keep students at school longer. "And research shows the longer students stay in education, the more success they will have in life," he adds.

Arthur Graves, the Ministry of Education's group manager for the Youth Guarantee scheme, agrees. "When students study subjects in areas which are relevant and interesting to them, they are much more likely to stay at school and remain engaged with their learning," he says. "Having a minimum of NCEA Level 2 also means students are well prepared to undertake further training, study or work, as they have a solid foundation to build on."

Rector Tully also says that these 'non-traditional' choices make



St Patrick's College graduates Te Pine and Nanumea Foua – both have excellent prospects thanks to their participation in the Youth Guarantee scheme

no difference to the students' experience of school in the pastoral sense. "Camaraderie is an important part of this school. Students are proud to be 'Streamers'. The guys that do the trades academy or work placements are still part of the school. They can play rugby for the school team and go to the Year 13 ball."

BETTER RESULTS FOR PASIFIKA STUDENTS

There are not many New Zealand schools more steeped in tradition than Silverstream's St Patrick's College, but to stay relevant, Rector Tully says the way boys are educated must change, especially when targeting better results for Pasifika students.

"As a school, we've identified the need to raise Pasifika student achievement and we are working hard to address this through

curriculum offerings," he explains. "We are supporting Pasifika families to see how the system can work for their children because we know parental involvement is key."

Rector Tully believes another key to success is relationships. "You need to treat people differently to get the same result. Research shows us strong relationships between teachers and students improve learning outcomes."

He believes this is particularly important for Pasifika students. "If students get on with their teacher, respect that teacher, and know that that teacher cares and wants the best for the student, we will get better results. It's about knowing your learner, creating a respectful relationship, and understanding motivations," he says.