

In 2020, fifteen Regional Skills Leadership Groups across New Zealand were created to identify and support better ways of meeting future skills and workforce needs in our regions and cities.

The Southland Murihiku Regional Skills Leadership Group (RSLG) is the southernmost RSLG, and incorporates Southland District, Gore District, and Invercargill and Bluff.

The aim of the Southland Murihiku RSLG is to develop a thriving regional labour market to transform the lives of all people living in Southland Murihiku, both now and in the future. Their work will guide the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in its investment decisions into vocational training opportunities offered across Southland Murihiku.

In June 2022, the group released their first Regional Workforce Plan (RWP). The RSLG's activities are underpinned by four foundation aspirations:

- *Aspiration One: System Change – our region is prepared for future labour market needs*
- *Aspiration Two: Change for People – our region supports people to thrive in the labour market*
- *Aspiration Three: Cultural Change – our region is committed to equitable outcomes for Māori*
- *Aspiration Four: Workplace Change – our region is renowned as a great place to live and work.*

To breathe life into the foundation aspirations and deepen understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in meeting them, the group chose five initial focus areas – the Priority Pou – including Rakatahi; Food and Fibre; Manufacturing and Engineering; Health Care and Social Assistance; and Tourism and Hospitality. Through these Pou, the group identified 20 key actions (listed on the last page of this document) to improve labour market outcomes for Southland Murihiku.

To tackle the 20 RWP actions and ensure that work was being progressed against each of the Priority Pou, the RSLG members formed five subgroups dedicated to:

- Vocational Education, Training and Careers
- Strategic Connections and Engagement
- Research
- Health, Māori and Rakatahi
- Business Development and Workplace Support

As the Co-chairs signalled in the first release of the RWP, the plan is a living document and will be revised to ensure it remains responsive to the changing needs of the region. This report reflects on the mahi undertaken in the six months post-RWP release, and a preview of the mahi the group is working on as they progress to their one-year milestone.

A few highlights from the group's mahi in 2022 include:

- launching the inaugural Regional Workforce Plan with an event held at Southern Institute of Technology, attended by the Minister for Regional Economic Development, Hon Carmel Sepuloni
- closing off the work on Action 13: Explore integrating Drivers Licensing into the education system or establishing a pipeline to speed up the process of licensing
- appointing a Youth Member and initiating the process for developing a youth rōpū
- completing the first stage of Action 5: Undertake research and analysis to better understand the opportunities provided for those categorised as 'underutilised' in the labour market, and beginning the second stage to consider at-risk groups.
- collaborations with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders including:
 - Workforce Development Councils
 - Te Pūkenga / SIT
 - Beyond 2025 Southland
 - Just Transition
 - Murihiku Regeneration
 - Ministry for Primary Industries
 - Great South
 - Mayoral Forum
 - Unions
 - Kānoa
 - Te Whatu Ora
 - Southland Business Chamber

The following tables provide a wider overview of the mahi progressed by each subgroup/the wider RSLG and secretariat, and categorised by:

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| <p><i>Doing the Mahi</i> RSLG is progressing mahi against the RWP actions</p> | <p><i>Making Connections</i> RSLG is building strategic working relationships to advance mahi against RWP actions</p> | <p><i>Partner Collaboration</i> RSLG is working alongside partners to advance their mahi, and contribute to RWP actions</p> |
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Vocational Education, Training and Careers

| <i>The last six months...</i> | <i>... the next six months</i> |
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| <p><i>Making Connections:</i> Establishing strong and productive connections with the relevant Workforce Development Councils, Industry Transformation Plans, Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and Te Pūkenga.</p> | <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Develop a clear understanding of the nature and scope of provision of advice to TEC, to enable delivery of vocational training based on regional requirements.</p> |
| <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Working with Te Pūkenga SIT to develop an understanding of current programme delivery across multiple industries, and fully understand gaps in provision. This will support the group’s recommendations to TEC.</p> | <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Build on a deep dive into current vocational education provision, to inform TEC advice on new or preferred ways of delivering training across Southland Murihiku.</p> <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Compile an overview of workplace learning activity in Southland, to identify Work-based Learning (WBL) employers and numbers of learners. Use information to identify examples of good and innovative practice to showcase across the region.</p> |
| <p><i>Partner Collaboration:</i> The RSLG work has been informed by the Economic Impact Assessment of Zero Fees completed by Te Pūkenga SIT. Results will further the group’s understanding of the potential impact to the region should Zero Fees discontinue.</p> | <p><i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Continue to maintain strong working relationship with Te Pūkenga SIT, to support advice to TEC on education provision for Southland Murihiku.</p> |
| <p><i>Making Connections and Partner Collaboration:</i> Following connections made through the RSLG visit to Tiwai, Te Pūkenga SIT is now working with the New Zealand Aluminium Smelter (NZAS) to map in-house training against NZ qualifications.</p> | <p><i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Continue to gain insights from Tiwai to support workforce transition planning and understand the skills available for redeployment (if required).</p> |

Strategic Connections and Engagement

| <i>The last six months...</i> | <i>... the next six months</i> |
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| <i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Close partnership developed with Murihiku Just Transition workstreams, particularly in relation to worker transitions, business transitions and long-term planning. | <i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Continue working alongside Just Transition to support development and implementation of key projects as they emerge through budget bid process. |
| <i>Doing the Mahi and Partner Collaboration:</i> Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with Beyond 2025 Southland for RSLG to deliver the Skilled Workforce Development workstream. | <i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Continue to work closely with the Beyond 2025 Southland team in the development of its regional plan, due for completion May 2023. |
| <i>Doing the Mahi and Partner Collaboration:</i> Co-branded (RSLG/Beyond 2025 Southland/Southland Chamber) employer survey completed. | <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Results of the survey will be analysed and incorporated into RSLG work. |
| <i>Partner Collaboration:</i> RSLG membership of Beyond 2025 Southland Retention and Attraction workstream established. | <i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Continued membership of the Beyond 2025 Southland Retention and Attraction group and supporting the workstream. |
| <i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Representatives from a range of local and regional support services, programmes and employers have attended RSLG meetings to provide overviews of relevant mahi and explore opportunities to work collaboratively. | <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Identify a mechanism for connecting support services and employers, with a particular focus on where there are information gaps. |
| <i>Making Connections:</i> Relationships established with Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), relevant Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) and Industry Transformation Plans (ITPs). | <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Consider the implications on RSLG to provide advice to TEC regarding vocational education needs for new spotlight and emerging sectors, as needs evolve (e.g., aquaculture, energy, construction, tech, people with disabilities and older workforce). |
| <i>Making Connections and Doing the Mahi:</i> Developed working relationships with other relevant RSLGs, Aquaculture NZ, Southern Institute of Technology (SIT), Just Transition, Kānoa and Sector Workforce Engagement Programme (SWEP) to explore funding and workforce needs for aquaculture as an emerging sector. | <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Incorporating the insights gained through these connections into the RWP refresh. |
| <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Quarterly Local Insights Reports (LIRs) completed. New communications platform being utilised to share LIRs with regional stakeholders and partners. | <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Continue to utilise LIRs as a mechanism for gaining insights from across the region and informing key stakeholders, partners and the community. |
| <i>Making Connections:</i> Individual connections with relevant stakeholders made by the Secretariat and RSLG members to support ongoing work. | <i>Doing the Mahi and Partner Collaboration:</i> Hold stakeholder events to share information and explore RSLG information gaps. Work alongside MSD, Beyond 2025 Southland, Great South and Southland Chambers in facilitating a regional workshop. |

Research

| <i>The last six months...</i> | <i>... the next six months</i> |
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| <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Completed a deep dive into young people not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) and youth at risk of limited employment (YARLE) profiles in the region. This also links to the Health, Māori and Rakatahi subgroup.</p> | <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Continue to monitor NEET rates and YARLE profiles within the region.</p> |
| <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> The RSLG has completed its first stage of research into underutilisation and underemployment within Southland Murihiku’s labour market. The first stage takes a “what’s the problem?” focus and takes a close look at underutilisation and at-risk groups.</p> <p><i>Partner Collaboration:</i> A ‘Seasonal Calendar’ developed by MPI has been supported as a solution for addressing productivity and utilisation through the underutilisation research.</p> | <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> The second stage of this research will take a “so what’s next?” approach and build upon the first piece of work. It will develop targeted actions focused on supporting at-risk groups who are more likely to be underutilised or underemployed.</p> |
| <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Understanding where the gaps in specific regional data lie regarding Māori in the workforce and Māori owned/operated business.</p> | <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Sourcing Māori business data to understand the profile of Māori-led tourism businesses in Southland, and contributions to the region’s economy across the board.</p> <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Advancing research that supports Action 15: Work with iwi, unions/workers and employers to strengthen the place of Māori across all workplaces. This will support work undertaken by the Health, Māori and Rakatahi subgroup.</p> |
| <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Understanding where the gaps in specific regional data lie regarding our ageing workforce.</p> | <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Sourcing data to understand the profile of the ageing workforce in Southland, and implications for the region’s economy.</p> |

Health, Māori and Rakatahi

| <i>The last six months...</i> | <i>... the next six months</i> |
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| <i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Representatives of the Secretariat worked in collaboration with Murihiku Regeneration on development of the Secondary Transitions Action Planning Pathway project. | <i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Continue mahi with the Secondary Transitions Action Planning Pathway project. |
| <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> The group appointed a Youth Member as part of a pilot with Ministry of Youth Development. | <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Gather insights from rakatahi around the region to inform our workforce planning and support. |
| <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> The group's evaluation of need for youth voice was completed. Confirmed need for establishment of a youth rōpū to support the youth member. | <i>Doing the Mahi and Making Connections:</i> Establish youth rōpū and utilise insights to incorporate an increased youth voice into the RWP. |
| <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Revised the industry specific focus for action 15 to include a broader scope (i.e., not just manufacturing). | <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Advancing research that supports Action 15: Work with iwi, unions/workers and employers to strengthen the place of Māori across all workplaces. This will be undertaken through the work of the Research subgroup. |
| <i>Making Connections:</i> Connect into employers across the region showcasing examples of good and innovative practice in rakatahi employment models. | <i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Build connections with more employers across the region showcasing examples of good and innovative practice in rakatahi employment models. Promote Southland business as employers of choice for rakatahi. |
| <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Sourcing Māori business data to understand the profile of Māori-led tourism businesses in Southland, and contributions to the region's economy across the board. | <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Analyse and use Māori business data to inform our RWP actions and better support Māori business within the region. |
| <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> The Secretariat is scoping the process required to develop an equity framework (Action 4). | <i>Doing the Mahi:</i> The Secretariat is scoping the process required to develop an equity framework (Action 4). |

Business Development and Workplace Support

| <i>The last six months...</i> | <i>... the next six months</i> |
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| <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> The RSLG identified a need to find and showcase models of good practice in numerous contexts associated with these actions.</p> | <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> showcase examples of good and innovative practice in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work-based learning • employment models focused on improving working conditions (across different sectors) • social procurement • recognition of learning differences • living wage <p>The group has identified the Hospitality sector as a good starting point for this work.</p> |
| <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Identifying work-based learning challenges and opportunities associated with the Te Pūkenga model, particularly in relation to capacity and capability within local businesses.</p> | <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Working to provide solutions to work-based learning challenges and opportunities associated with the Te Pūkenga model, particularly in relation to capacity and capability within local businesses.</p> |
| <p><i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Social procurement workshop hosted by E tū to share good practice and explore opportunities for the local business community.</p> | <p><i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Potential social procurement business award to be developed in partnership with Southland Chamber.</p> |
| <p><i>Making Connections and Partner Collaboration:</i> Clustering workshop hosted by the Southland Chamber to explore relevance to local businesses.</p> <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Clustering proposed as a potential solution within underutilisation study.</p> | <p><i>Partner Collaboration:</i> Connect into Just Transitions clustering proposal as opportunities are confirmed.</p> |
| <p><i>Making Connections:</i> Learning Difference Aotearoa presentation to the RSLG to understand challenges and opportunities associated with learner differences, as both employers and employees.</p> | <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> Insights will be incorporated into 2023 RWP refresh.</p> |
| <p><i>Doing the mahi:</i> Continually reviewing progress against our action plan and considering what needs to be included in the 2023 refresh.</p> | <p><i>Doing the Mahi:</i> The group is planning a stakeholder event to coincide with launch of 2023 RWP refresh, to share models of good practice.</p> |

Action Plan

Te Mahere Mahi

Action 1: Work alongside the range of local and central government initiatives already underway, (e.g., Just Transition) to identify synergies and opportunities to work together and ensure work programmes regarding the region's labour market are complementary where possible.

Action 2: Facilitate a coordinated regional response to labour market aspects of sector and government consultations and initiatives, e.g., immigration settings, health system reforms.

Action 3: Collate and advise the education sector on:

- New and/or preferred ways of delivering training across the region.
- Specific skills shortages, and the generic/management skills needed to support workforce development in the region.

Action 4: Develop an overarching equity framework that ensures te ao Māori is embedded into all analysis, insights and actions produced by the RSLG in the future.

Action 5: Undertake research and analysis to better understand the opportunities provided for those categorised as 'underutilised' in the labour market.

Action 6: Connect support services and employers with each other to enable collaboration, sharing of ideas, and best practice.

Action 7: Contribute a 'one' labour market voice to the development of a clear strategy that promotes Southland Murihiku as an ideal destination for workers to live, work and play.

Action 8: Support cross sector and inter-regional planning to improve working conditions – with a particular focus on remote locations, seasonality and intermittent demand.

Action 9: Support the greater use of procurement levers, e.g., Regional social procurement policies, Southland-wide approach to government and large private tenders.

Action 10: Support a sector-wide approach to changing the poor perceptions of working in the four initial RWP priority sectors - promoting the sectors' diversity of roles and career pathways available.

Action 11: Career pathways and advice:

- Support the mapping and promotion of career pathways and entry points to the four initial RWP priority sectors, to support transition into and clear pathways through the sectors.
- Promote initiatives to improve the career advice and practical support our rakatahi receive.

Action 12: Support employer and learner uptake of apprenticeship programmes and other government-funded training options, with resources readily available to encourage this participation.

Action 13: Explore integrating Drivers Licensing into the education system or establishing a pipeline to speed up the process of licensing.

Action 14: Support the development of an intergenerational model, supporting not only rakatahi but also whānau, creating a stronger relationship between family, support services, employers, and education providers.

Action 15: Work with iwi, unions/workers and employers to strengthen the place of Māori in the workforce - in particular, health and safety outcomes and career progression.

Action 16: Work with iwi to better understand the shape and implications of Māori-led tourism and hospitality in Southland Murihiku.

Action 17: Support the development of a holistic health plan for rakatahi, encompassing principles like 'Te Whare Tapa Whā', used to support all types of youth health problems.

Action 18: Work with iwi and Māori health providers to authenticate te ao Māori models of practice that attract Māori into the health sector.

Action 19: Promote and share good practice tools and training that foster safe, supportive workplace environments and a positive culture among staff, e.g., supporting the retention of older workers and the sharing of their knowledge; increasing leadership capability; encouraging a more diverse, but also inclusive, workforce; promoting flexible work practices; providing quality on-job training and development, and paying living wage at a minimum.

Action 20: Promote and share strategic, governance and capital investment best practice and information.