

Whakatipu Rākau, Karaihe, me te Mahi Māra Nursery, Turf and Gardening



Key challenges

- Sustainability
- Environmental Sustainability and Conservation
- Skilled workers availability
- Attraction and retention

Industry overview

- Nursery, Turf and Gardening includes **Nursery Production, Turf Growing, Gardening Services, and Floriculture Production**, and sub-industries such as **Amenity and Sports Turf**.
- The industry supports our unique position as a **biodiversity 'hotspot'** around the world.¹
- **Availability of skilled workers** is a top issue within the industry.

Insights

Industry

- **Flooding and cyclone devastation** in 2023 highlighted the need for green infrastructure, native afforestation and new horticulture developments.²
- There is a long-term **downward trend in export revenue** from cut flowers and foliage.
- Nursery and Sports Turf are both focussed on **water usage**, while Sports Turf in particular is navigating a raft of different **legislation and compliance** challenges around greenkeeping. Nursery is also considering **minimising plastic use** and navigating an **increased demand for native tree planting** across the motu.

[Read more >](#)

Workforce

- It is estimated that the **Nursery industry needs to recruit around 250 people per year** into permanent roles.³
- On average, the **workforce is older than the national average**, particularly in Floriculture Production.
- The **quarterly worker turnover rate** for the Nursery and Floriculture Production industry is **consistently higher** than all industries.

[Read more >](#)

Learners and Providers

- The **existing qualifications do not align** with the skills required on the job.
- The **number of learners has increased** over the last five years, peaking in 2021. There has also been strong growth in the uptake of industry-based complex apprenticeships.
- **Pathways into the industry are not obvious**, especially for Sports Turf.

[Read more >](#)

1 -Department of Conservation, 'Te Mana o Te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy Summary', August 2020

2 - New Zealand Plant Producers Incorporated, 'Annual Report 2023', (New Zealand: New Zealand Plant Producers Incorporated, 2023)

3 -New Zealand Plant Producers Incorporated, 'Annual Report 2021', (New Zealand: New Zealand Plant Producers Incorporated, 2021)

Opportunities

Attraction and Retention

Attracting people with the right skills is a challenge and retaining staff in a competitive market can be difficult.

- Attracting people into the industry remains a challenge, with the Nursery industry struggling with a public perception of being an unskilled job.
- Attracting people to the industry is further compounded in urban areas where the cost of living doesn't align with the remuneration of the job.
- The industry is eager to diversify the workforce, which is 71% European.

Qualifications

The existing qualifications do not align with the skills required on the job.

- The industry is interested in shifting to more apprenticeships and on the job training.

Roadmap Actions

Action

What is the problem?

What are we doing about it?

Work with industry to raise awareness of existing entry pathway options

Entry pathways for learners into the industry, in particular Sports Turf, are not obvious.

We will work with industry to make them aware of the options that are available, including the Trades Academy and Gateway programme at Primary ITO | Te Pūkenga and the Te Pūkenga Pathways into Primary Industries Programme.

Work with industry to build a better understanding of the Sports Turf workforce data

We do not have a good way of showing or analysing data on the Sports Turf industry workforce. The industry data available to us using Stats NZ industry codes doesn't effectively represent this workforce.

We worked with industry and Stats NZ to see if there were better methods we could use to identify and understand workforce data within the Sports Turf industry. In December 2023 we published Sports Turf industry analytical resources in dedicated area of the workforce development plan.

Action

What is the problem?

What are we doing about it?

Explore including more botany focussed training in both qualifications and programmes.

The nursery and amenity sub-industries have said that current training is too management focused and that a better knowledge of botany would be useful. Botany is also a prerequisite for people who wish to move into related work or higher levels of study.

We will explore how botany can be included in qualifications and programmes. Muka Tangata is planning for a review of Horticulture qualifications, standards and micro credentials to start in 2025. The focus on botany will be explored in detail during this review and industry input will drive subsequent changes. In the interim, Muka Tangata will respond to any specific requests for changes to existing qualifications or standards in our role as a Standard Setting Body.

***Keep up to date with progress on our Workforce Development Plans**

This represents a snapshot in time of the workforce development plan. For the most up to date information, please visit: mukatangata.workforceskills.nz or [sign up to our mailing list](#) for updates.