

Kaimoana Seafood



Key challenges

- Reliance on migrant workforce
- Climate Change
- Skilled workers availability
- Decrease in learner numbers

Industry overview

- The Seafood industry is **highly regionalised**, presenting an opportunity for economic and workforce development outside the main economic centres.
- The industry represents a **potential growth area for the economy**. Aquaculture is set to take centre stage over the next five years and is likely to be a key driver of the industry's performance.¹
- Attracting New Zealanders into the industry rather than relying on foreign workers to fill the gaps where there are **ongoing labour and skills shortages** remains a challenge for the industry
- More than **one quarter of businesses** in the industry are **Māori owned**.

Insights

Industry

- The total export value for the Seafood industry accounts for around **4% of the total export revenue** in the food and fibre sector.
- **Rising input costs** are putting downward pressure on profit margins.
- **Climate change is creating measurable changes** in New Zealand waters, and warming sea temperatures and ocean acidification will continue to have negative implications for industries such as wild-catch fisheries and aquaculture.²

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Workforce

- **Immigration is an important source of labour** and workforce shortages are expected to ease as migration increases.
- **More than one quarter** of the seafood industry workforce **identify as Māori**.
- **Over half** of the Seafood workforce is **located on the South Island**.

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Learners and Providers

- The majority of learners are undertaking the **New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Skills (Level 2)**, an entry-level qualification for the food and fibre sector.
- Through a seafood qualifications review conducted by Muka Tangata, industry and providers advised that the Seafood strand, alongside other seafood qualifications, was **not meeting industry needs**.

[Read more >](#)

1 - NZ Government, 'The New Zealand Government Aquaculture Strategy', (New Zealand Government, n.d.)

2 - Fisheries New Zealand, 'Assessment of Potential Effects of Climate-Related Changes in Coastal and Offshore Waters on New Zealand's Seafood Sector', New Zealand Aquatic Environment and Biodiversity, no. Report No. 126 (May 2021): 157.

Opportunities

Attraction and Retention

There is a significant reliance on migrant labour to keep some areas of the industry afloat, and difficulty attracting and retaining an Aotearoa based workforce.

- Migrant labour has traditionally been used to fill a local labour supply issue and Seafood NZ states that New Zealanders' involvement in the Seafood industry is low and has been declining for some time.
- Engagement feedback has told us that the Aquaculture industry is also considering how increased mechanisation and automation technologies can transform the Seafood workforce and what sort of education and training needs will be needed to support this in the future.

Qualifications

The uptake of qualifications relating to Seafood has been declining over the past five years and the existing qualifications are not flexible enough to meet industry need.

- There has been a decline in the number of learners enrolled in vocational education relating to Seafood over the past five years.
- Engagement with key stakeholders in the industry and those involved in Seafood training in the vocational education and training sector revealed that the reasons for this decrease are complex.

Sustainability

Mitigating and adapting to climate change and sustainability is a focus of the industry.

- Warming sea temperatures and ocean acidification will continue to have implications for industries such as aquaculture and wild catch fisheries.
- Māori have significant assets in the Seafood industry, but quota ownership is limited to specified management areas, and it is unclear how the impacts of warming seas will impact the cultural and economic future well-being of Māori communities.

Roadmap Actions

Action

Review the suite of seafood qualifications

What is the problem?

Engagement feedback has told us that the Aquaculture industry is considering how increased mechanisation and automation technologies can transform the Seafood workforce and what sort of education and training needs will be required to support this in the future.

The vocational education system has not been flexible enough to meet industry need. There has been a decline in the number of learners enrolled in vocational education relating to Seafood over the past five years and this is due to several interrelated factors. The industry needs more flexible delivery models that meet the needs of learners and employers.

What are we doing about it?

We are working with industry to review the suite of Seafood qualifications to ensure that they meet industry needs. We are taking a new approach based on partnering with industry, iwi Māori and vocational education providers to review and develop qualifications, standards, micro-credentials, in parallel with the programmes to deliver them.

Action

What is the problem?

What are we doing about it?

Improve the recognition of existing skills so that learners are not repeating unnecessary training

Formal education and training systems are not the only way in which people develop skills, with people gaining skills through work experience, informal and non-formal learning, and/or outside the country in which they work. The fact that these skills are invisible magnifies the challenge of skills under-utilisation and mismatch and can lead to learners repeating unnecessary training.

Muka Tangata is working with stakeholders, including industry, providers, the Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence, and government, to better understand, identify and address barriers to recognising existing skills. For example, recognition of prior learning towards formal learning. Delivery and Assessment for the 21st Century is a joint project between Muka Tangata, Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence and Te Pūkenga.

Explore appropriate delivery models

Industries have indicated that they are looking for delivery that is flexible and that meets their industry's circumstances. In addition, we know that not all learners learn the same way.

Alongside the seafood qualifications review, we are looking to work with providers to ensure programmes are developed that enable the flexibility to study how, when and where best suits industry and learners. Working with industry, learners, and providers, Muka Tangata is exploring and supporting different ways in which learning can meet the diverse needs of learners and employers. This recognises that the vast majority of learning in the sector is carried out on-job. It could include better combinations of on-job and 'classroom' learning; learning closer to where learners live and work; and/or online or computer-based learning. Delivery and Assessment for the 21st Century is a joint project between Muka Tangata, Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence and Te Pūkenga.

Support the use of more flexible assessment methods

The uptake of qualifications relating to Seafood has been declining over the past five years and the existing qualifications are not flexible enough to meet industry need. The industry needs more flexible delivery models that meet the needs of learners and employers.

In conjunction with delivery models, we are looking to work with providers to develop assessment methods suitable to the industry. This could include the use of naturally occurring evidence, company Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and verification, for assessment, to support or replace the current largely bookwork assessments. Alongside flexible delivery models, Muka Tangata is also supporting providers to use assessment methods that are suitable to a wider range of ākongā (learners). We are exploring whether assessment provisions can allow for multiple and diverse methods of presenting evidence that cater for different learning needs, such as videos, photographs and work evidence. Delivery and Assessment for the 21st Century is a joint project between Muka Tangata, Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence and Te Pūkenga.

Action

What is the problem?

What are we doing about it?

Understand why learners do not complete qualifications

Learners are not completing the seafood industry qualifications they start.

As part of the review of Seafood qualifications, we will undertake further research to understand the reasons for this, including identifying barriers.

***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.