

# Ratonga Tautoko Support Services



## Key challenges

- Specialised industries
- Seasonality
- Skilled workforce

## Industry overview

- Support Services represents the **largest grouping of employees** across the food and fibre sector.
- There is no single 'overall' industry picture but instead a **diverse set of challenges** which makes it difficult to identify the best way to engage with industry.
- Our picture of the industry is limited, and **we need better data and information** to understand the various groups.

## Insights

### Industry

- In 2023, the combined revenue from Landscape Services, Shearing, Cropping and Agricultural Support Services, and Livestock and Other Agricultural Supplies Wholesaling was over \$15 billion, with an **estimated GDP of \$3.5 billion**.
- **Industry revenue is generally forecast to rise** over the next few years.

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### Workforce

- The **seasonal** nature of several sub-industries means that some areas have a transitory workforce, and in certain cases this also makes it **difficult to attract and retain staff**.
- The diversity of Support Services means that there is a **huge variety of skills sets**, with some workers being quite specialised, and others struggling to secure consistent year-round employment.

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### Learners and Providers

- Due to the varying nature of the Support Services workforce, it is **difficult to capture exact learner numbers**, as some learners are counted in more generic programmes and qualifications that may span across multiple industries.
- We have noted a **lack of formal qualifications** across Support Services, and non-formal training options are often used by industry to fill this gap.

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## Opportunities

### Non-formal Learning

Some parts of the Support Services industry are using informal training to fill a gap where formal qualifications do not exist.

- Qualifications across industries are limited and, in some cases, are not aligned with more recent government strategies and plans.
- It is not uncommon for informal training to fill the gap.

### Attraction and Retention

The Support Services industry struggles with attraction and retention across industries.

- Many of the roles in the industry are very specific and often seasonal and remuneration varies across the different sub-industries.
- There is not currently a lot of flexibility to easily move between the sub-industries. In some cases, these factors can also make it difficult to attract and retain people in the industry.

### Qualifications

There are elements of the existing Pest Control qualifications that do not align well with industry requirements.

- The existing formal qualifications for Pest Control do not have mātauranga Māori well embedded in them and are not aligned with the Predator Free 2050 goals of the Department of Conservation.

## Roadmap Actions

### Action

### What is the problem?

### What are we doing about it?

#### Support workers to move across the industry

We understand from engagement with industry that some areas of Support Services struggle with retention of staff. Many of the roles in the industry are very specific and often seasonal and remuneration varies across the different sub-industries. The sub-industries vary, with some employees struggling to have consistent year-round work, and others with specialised skill sets. There is not currently a lot of flexibility to easily move between the sub-industries.

As part of our work to create a framework, and suite of products, that maximises flexibility and transferability, we will explore reviewing and developing qualifications that are transferrable across a variety of industries.

#### Work to make qualifications more flexible

The industry has said that the qualifications contain material not required for their role, while other skills are missing.

We will work with industry to identify potential areas for improvement, including looking at skills standards and credentials.

Action	What is the problem?	What are we doing about it?
<b>Potential to develop Groundspread NZ micro-credential (working in collaboration with Hanga-Aro-Rau)</b>	Industry has identified qualification gaps for spreading fertiliser.	The nutrient application micro-credential has been approved by NZQA and has been listed on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework. The nutrient application micro-credential, developed in collaboration with Groundspread NZ, provides a further opportunity for industry professionals to have their skills recognised, and also enables those entering the industry to have a clear pathway to acquire the skills they need in order to succeed.
<b>Support cross-Workforce Development Council work on pest control</b>	Pest control is a sub-group of Hunting and Trapping in the Support Services industry. It crosses over with two other Workforce Development Councils - Toi Mai and Toitū te Waiora. The existing formal qualifications do not have mātauranga Māori well embedded in them and are not aligned with the Predator Free 2050 goals of the Department of Conservation.	We are supporting Toi Mai and Toitū te Waiora in their work in relation to pest control so that there is a common view for a workforce that spans across sectors. Toi Mai is reviewing two Parks unit standards and exploring a Conservation micro-credential.
<b>Better data and information to understand the industries</b>	Our picture of the industry is limited.	We have recently updated the industry, workforce and learner data and insights in the Support Services workforce development plan. We recognise that some industries have little visibility due to challenges with our current data. To address this, we are preparing occupation-based dashboards based on census data that will help identify patterns and trends within these industries.
<b>Support the aviation industry's workforce development plan</b>	Aviation New Zealand is developing a workforce development plan for the aviation industry, including drone training.	We continue to work with Ringa Hora to understand the needs of Aviation NZ and whether there is a supporting role for Muka Tangata in this industry or not.  Ringa Hora and Muka Tangata have met with the aviation industry, introducing the work of WDCs and an overview of what we can offer. Ringa Hora will lead this work. At present, the aviation industry does not use any Muka Tangata qualifications – they are licensed based industry; therefore, it is unlikely they will use our qualifications. We have suggested they work with the Tertiary Education Commission directly to improve awareness of the industry on the careers platform as there is a shortage of ground crew and pilots.

Action

What is the problem?

What are we doing about it?

**Support learners to succeed**

We know that supporting the physical and emotional wellbeing of learners (pastoral care) is an important component of helping them to succeed.

Through our quality assurance processes we are increasing our focus on pastoral care as we look more holistically at providers' delivery and assessment. As part of our programme endorsement function, we will ensure appropriate support is available to learners. And we will continue to talk to providers about how they are implementing the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

Research has already identified good practice and successful models, but there still appears to be a gap in implementation. We will investigate what barriers may exist to the wider uptake and use of proven pastoral care approaches.

**\*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](https://mukatangata.workforceskills.nz) or [sign up to our mailing list](#) for updates.