

**Tertiary  
Education  
Commission**

Te Amorangi  
Mātauranga Matua



# **ITP Roadmap 2020: What we heard from the sector and its stakeholders**

# Acknowledgments

We would like to thank every one of you who shared your views with us.

We would also like to acknowledge the Tertiary Education Union, TIASA, BusinessNZ, chambers of commerce, the Career Development Association of New Zealand (CDANZ), the Employers and Manufacturers Association (EMA), Te Tira Manukura and all of the ITPs for hosting us and helping to arrange meetings or share surveys.

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# Part 1: Introduction

# The ITP Roadmap 2020 project

Over the last decade, New Zealand's institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) have had to contend with increasing challenges. Learner numbers have been in decline, with domestic student numbers reducing by nearly a third in the past 10 years. Demographics are changing, the labour market has strengthened, students are now staying longer at secondary school and ITPs have encountered policy and funding changes as well as increased competition from other parts of the sector.

While some ITPs have remained financially strong, most have struggled to adjust to falling enrolments and income. These challenges are pressing and threaten the viability of ITPs. System-level change will be necessary to ensure all New Zealanders have access to quality vocational education and training (VET) now and into the future.

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) established the ITP Roadmap 2020 project at the beginning of 2018 to work with the sector and wider community to identify options for change. Our goal was to look at options to future-proof the sector: to make it agile and responsive, while retaining and building on the sector's strengths in delivering to the needs of its regions.

Having heard many viewpoints during a series of intensive public engagements from June to August 2018, TEC provided advice on potential options to the Minister of Education. The Minister is considering these options and is due to report back to his Cabinet colleagues by the end of 2018.

The ITP Roadmap project runs alongside the Ministry of Education's wider review of New Zealand's vocational education and training system.

You can find out more about the project at [www.tec.govt.nz](http://www.tec.govt.nz).

## Beyond the ITP network

While the focus of our project was on the ITP network, we heard throughout our engagement that ITPs need to operate as part of a broader education system that delivers for all New Zealanders, from early childhood education through compulsory schooling, tertiary education and lifelong learning. Many of the themes summarised in this report are common with the [Kōrero Mātauranga/Education Conversation](#) launched by the Ministry of Education in March 2018.

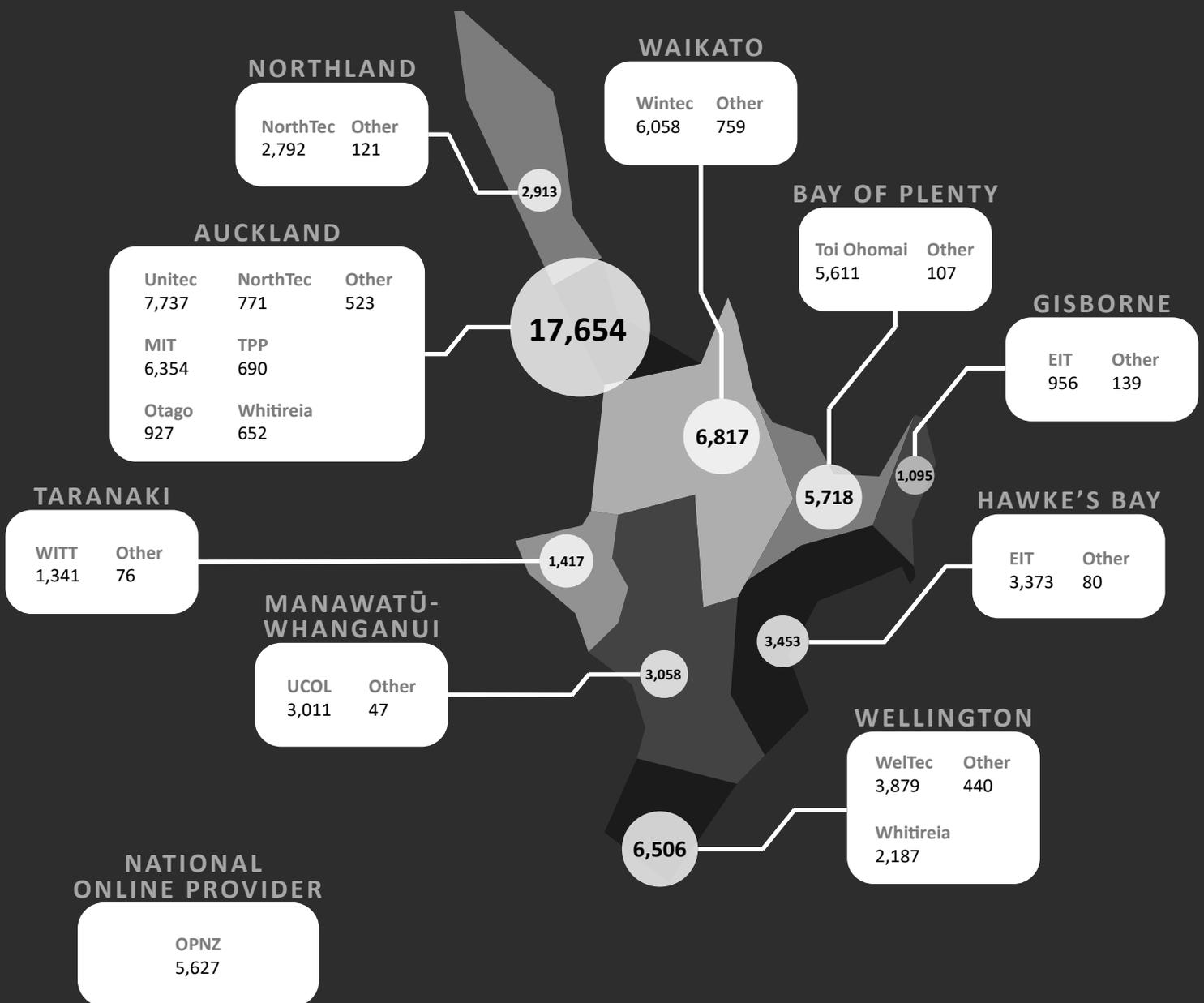
## Purpose

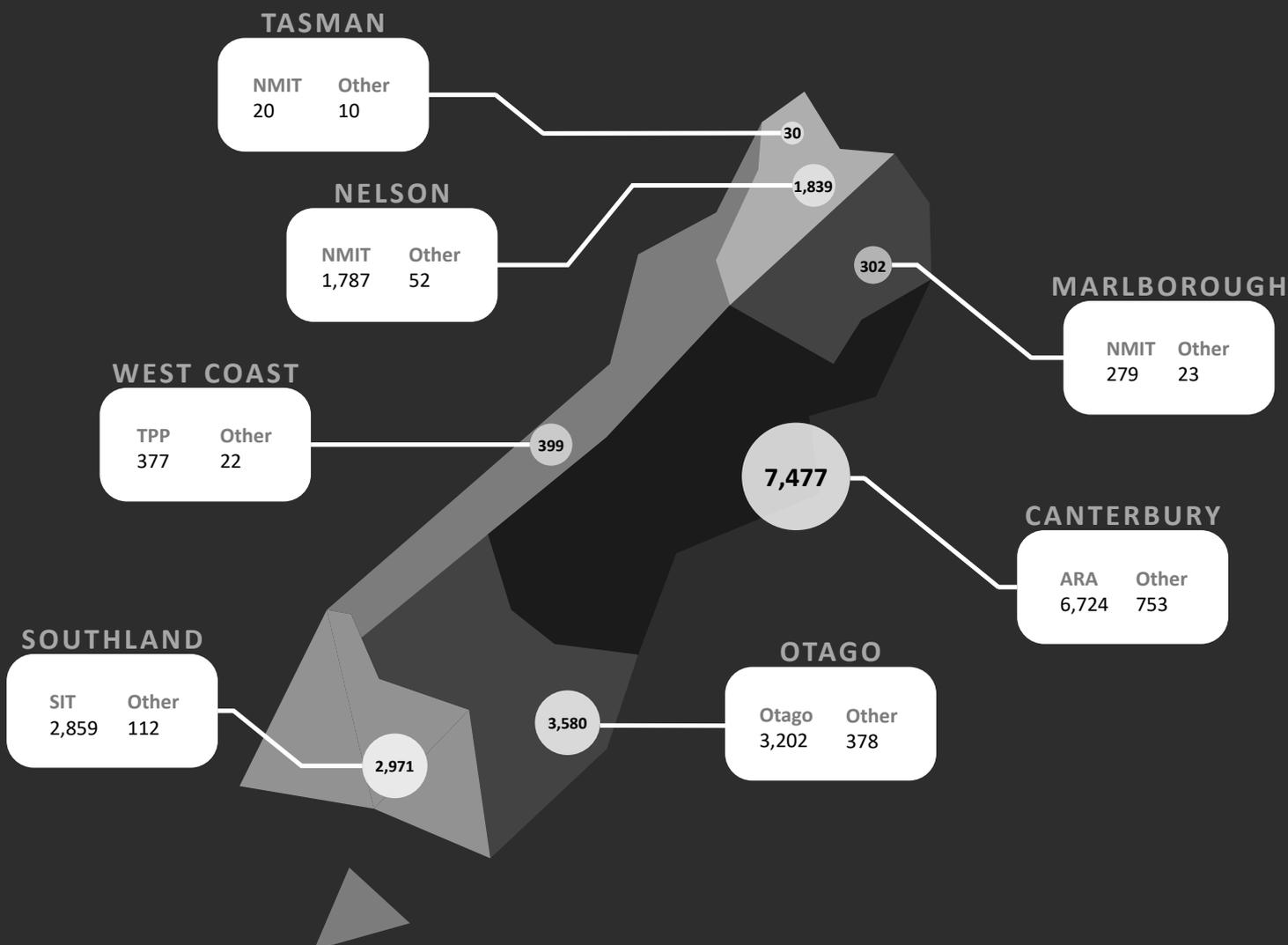
This report provides a summary of what we heard during our engagements as part of ITP Roadmap 2020. Our aim has been to reflect the feedback and kōrero (discussions) as fully as possible. For a glossary of Māori and Samoan terms used throughout this report, see [page 55](#).

All of the views we've heard have informed TEC's thinking on this work. This report was provided to the Minister of Education alongside our advice on the future of the ITP network.

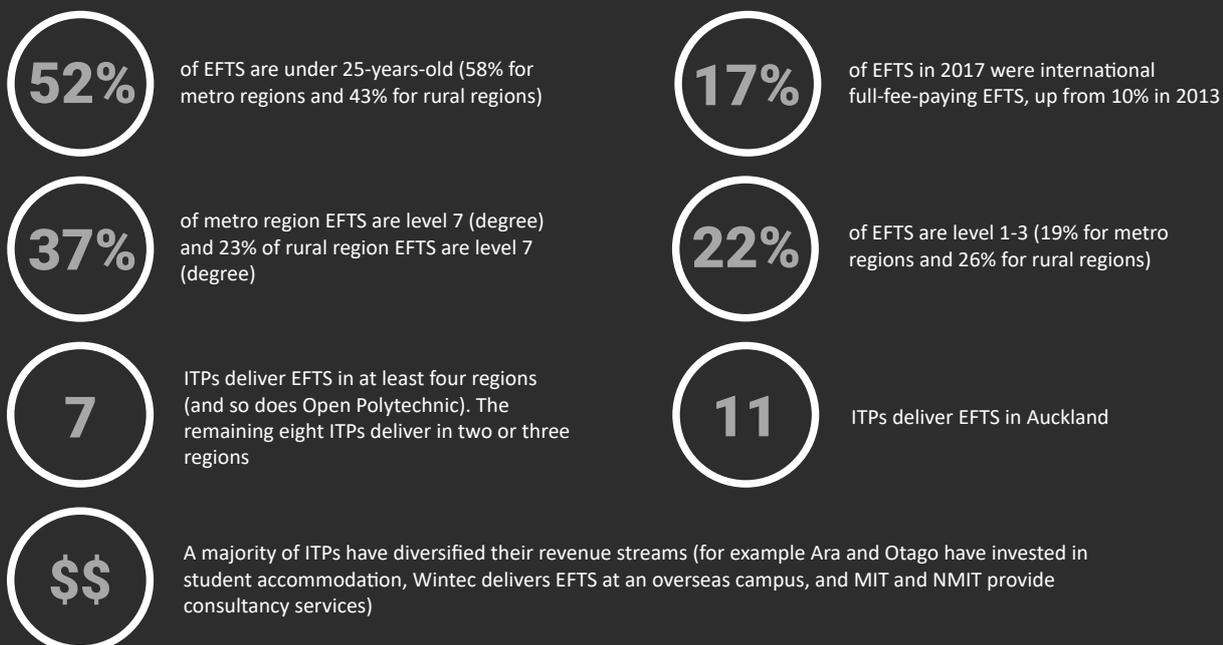
# Overview

There are 16 ITPs in New Zealand, which collectively receive around \$500 million a year in government funding. The following map details the main ITP delivery in each region, and the number of equivalent full-time students (EFTS) at each in 2017. 'Other' refers to the remainder of the ITP sector. Please note there may be small discrepancies in the figures due to rounding.





## 2017 ITP network key facts



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## Uru kahikatea

E tū kahikatea  
Hei whakapae ururoa  
Awhi mai, awhi atu  
Tātou tātou e

Stand like the  
kahikatea tree  
To brave the storms  
Embrace and receive  
each other  
We are one together

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## Whakataukī for the project

We used the whakataukī (Māori proverb) 'Uru Kahikatea', and the associated waiata, as a frame for the ITP Roadmap 2020 project. Uru kahikatea means a grove of kahikatea (white pine). Many iwi have stories about uru kahikatea but ours comes from Ngāti Kahungunu on the Wairarapa coast, the iwi of our Deputy Chief Executive Ōritetanga, Paora Ammunson. He told us:

In the early days, when the iwi were out exploring their territory, a scout came back and said, 'I've found this amazing grove of trees. What makes them so unique is that although the individual trees don't have very deep root systems, they stand close together and their roots interlock just below the surface, which gives them collective strength and resilience. This should be a metaphor for how we live together in this new land.'

We think this is a beautiful sentiment and a great metaphor for the ITP network in New Zealand, so we adopted it as the whakataukī for this project.

# Our engagement

## Regional meetings

The ITP Roadmap 2020 team travelled around the country in June-August 2018, holding meetings at a main campus of each of the 16 ITPs. The purpose of the meetings was to hear the views of ITP governance (council members), management, staff, students and other stakeholders such as iwi, business, community groups, local government and other local organisations.

At each of the 80 engagements, we sought feedback on three key questions:

1. What's working well at your ITP now? What doesn't need to change?
2. What's not working well enough at your ITP now? What does need to change?
3. How do you think what your ITP does, and how it does it, should change over the next decade?

The key themes to emerge from these questions are captured in Part 1 of this report.

## Hui and fono with Māori and Pasifika

The Māori and Pasifika staff, students and stakeholders we met with gave us insights into what could improve outcomes for learners and their whānau and 'āiga (families). We met with them at the broader regional meetings as well as specific hui and fono:

- › **Te Tira Manukura**, a national forum of Māori senior strategic kaimahi (staff) at ITPs, hosted us at its annual general meeting and provided feedback on how the ITP network needs to work with and support Māori.
- › **We held a workshop** with a group of ākonga Māori (Māori learners), kaimahi, iwi representatives and government officials to consider different ITP network scenarios.
- › **We held two fono** with Pasifika stakeholders. The first was with representatives from business, communities, the education sector, central and local government and 10 secondary school students. The second was with senior Pasifika staff across the ITPs.
- › **We got feedback** from 45 Year 13 students and 12 university students involved in [MATES \(Mentoring and Tutoring Education Scheme\)](#).

We've also been working with Māori and Pasifika in our working groups and co-design process, and with our Māori and Pasifika staff at TEC. Read more about this in [Part 3](#), on page 42 of this report.

## Online surveys

Alongside the regional engagements, hui and fono, we also ran an anonymous online survey. We received around 1,000 responses from five different groups:

- › **staff members** working at ITPs – 368 respondents
- › **learners** studying at ITPs – 302 respondents
- › **people considering tertiary study** – 229 respondents
- › **employers** who have hired ITP graduates – 42 respondents
- › **community members** – 40 respondents.

The survey questions were tailored to the different audiences, with the themes aligned to some of the questions we asked as part of the regional engagements, particularly for ITP staff members and current students. Additional questions for the other three groups focused on students' and employers' experiences, views on the role of the ITP sector or the meaning of vocational education.

## Email feedback

We received more than fifty substantive email submissions between March and August 2018. This report incorporates that feedback.

# Key themes of responses

## What's working well

**Learner support:** Learners feel at home, respected and understood at their ITPs.

**Committed ITP workforce:** Many dedicated ITP staff will go the extra mile to help their learners succeed.

**Trusted local partners:** ITPs often work with industry to meet their needs and help grow communities in their region.

**Some areas of provision:** ITPs have strengths in applied learning and vocational education, and some innovative delivery models exist.

## What's not working well

**Purpose and brand:** ITPs are trying to be everything to everyone, and suffer from perception problems. This is a challenge for the wider vocational education and training sector, not just for ITPs.

**The operating environment impacts on sustainability and quality:** The environment ITPs operate in is competitive, creates duplication and inefficiencies, and they struggle to reach economies of scale. Staffing structures can be inflexible.

**Staff and student representation:** Good systems and processes exist at some ITPs, but at others, staff and learners aren't being involved enough.

**Learner success:** Issues of churn exist and some ITPs are not yet meeting the needs of Māori and Pasifika.

**Meeting industry need:** ITPs aren't always responding well enough to skills shortages, mismatches and gaps in local labour markets.

## What needs to change or improve over the next decade

**Be more outward facing, flexible and responsive:** ITPs should be outward facing partners that respond to the need of communities, industry, Māori and other stakeholders, and contribute to regional transformation.

**Build the ITP brand:** ITPs can promote their advantages and build a stronger brand for the sector.

**Focus on skills:** ITPs need to develop people's skills for the future.

**Diversify models of teaching and learning:** ITPs should move towards delivery that better supports lifelong learning — with shorter, flexible programmes, work-integrated learning and blended models of delivery.

**Workforce model:** The ITP workforce can be more flexible, but it must have strong leadership, valued staff and well-supported learners at its centre.

## Ideas for the future ITP network model

**Balance centralisation and decentralisation:** Some things could be centralised, but the model needs to retain local diversity and autonomy.

**Not one-size-fits-all:** Each region is different and ever-changing, and the ITP network will require a solution that can continually adapt to meet local needs.

## Feedback on the system

**Funding models and operational settings:** Aspects of the system are slow, and disincentivise or stop ITPs from effectively fulfilling their roles while remaining financially sustainable.

**Agency collaboration:** Government agencies can improve how they work together to support the sector.

## What we heard from Māori

**Learning and success as Māori:** ITPs can better support Māori learners and whānau by focusing on flexible learning models, improving access to education and giving learners skills for lifelong careers, as well as other social and cultural benefits.

**Partnerships:** Government, ITPs and Māori whānau, iwi and hapū can build stronger partnerships that help create more positive outcomes for learners. Clear roles and responsibilities are important in making partnerships work.

## What we heard from Pasifika

**Learning and success as Pasifika:** ITPs need to ensure Pasifika learners and staff are well supported, able to celebrate their cultures and have culturally relevant experiences.

**Career education and community engagement:** ITP education works best for Pasifika where their 'āiga, schools and communities are actively involved, and support Pasifika learners to transition into areas of study that lead to work.



**Part 2:  
What we heard**

## Our questions

When we travelled around the ITPs to meet with staff, students and the broader community, we asked three key questions:

1. What's working well at your ITP now? What doesn't need to change?
2. What's not working well enough at your ITP now? What does need to change?
3. How do you think what your ITP does, or how it does it, should change over the next decade?

It quickly became clear through our kōrero that the picture is never entirely bad, nor is it perfect. Even the struggling ITPs are doing some great work, and those that are performing well are still able to make improvements. Similarly, some strengths and weaknesses are individual to ITPs, and some mirror the sector as a whole. Our aim here is to reflect this picture from our group discussions, survey results and email feedback.

Following the three sections below on what we heard in response to the three key questions, we have included an additional section summarising people's views on how well the system is working for ITPs. We gained a lot of valuable feedback about the funding settings, rules and regulations, policy design and implementation and how government agencies work together. While some of this feedback is reflected throughout the report, you can find this more in-depth section on [page 38](#).

## What's working well

This section looks at what people told us is working well (ie, what doesn't need to change) and should be retained and built on.

### **The status quo is not sustainable, but don't fix what's not broken**

What came through from our engagement was that ITPs are making things work to varying degrees, but they are having to make compromises to survive. This means the current focus for some is on short-term sustainability, which may come at the cost of making the right investments for learners, communities and industry.

Even with a long-term strategic view, and the pride some staff spoke of in tight fiscal management, there can be thin margins for investment in refreshing their IT systems, upgrading facilities, providing adequate resourcing and creating wider change. Governors told us that, ideally, the sector would be taking a 20-year outlook. Within the current trajectory and environment, the status quo is not sustainable.

Despite the challenges facing the sector, ITPs and their communities asked that we don't try and fix what isn't broken. ITPs that are doing well said they understand their region and operating environment, meet the needs of their stakeholders, have well-embedded values and organisational culture, share aspects of specialisation and scale, and deliver evidence-based, outcomes-focused education.

*“We're well performing, but we're delaying the inevitable. If we continue with the status quo we'll be having a different conversation.”*

**– ITP governor**

All 16 ITPs said they are contributing to economic and social outcomes, not just where their main campus is based but, for many ITPs, also in smaller towns and isolated areas throughout their regions. We heard that it is important ITPs retain the ability to respond to their stakeholders and make decisions on how they add value to their communities.

## The ‘why’ and ‘who’: Meeting learner, community and industry needs

**E ai ki te whakataukī, he aha te mea nui o te ao? He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata.**

According to this Māori proverb, people are the most important thing in the world. We heard that connections, relationships and outcomes are strengths of many ITPs. When working well, relationships are built systematically and connections are widely spread. Where it isn’t, there are still many committed individuals who are making a difference.

### Many learners at ITPs feel at home, respected and understood

The majority of learners we spoke with told us that they feel a sense of belonging at their ITP. They are treated with respect, recognised as being more than just students and are empowered to achieve. The great relationships many have with their tutors and other staff are a large contributing factor. We asked the learners we met with at each ITP whether they felt their tutors or lecturers cared about them as people. The response was an overwhelming yes.

Learners also said the ITP environment makes all the difference – particularly for those who are re-engaging in education. This included small class sizes, celebrating diversity and a friendly, family feeling.

At some ITPs, this culture is reflected in formal structures for student representation, where learners have constructive relationships with staff at all levels, and participate formally in feedback and decision making. In addition, some ITPs are doing well to provide learners with work experience and industry connections, particularly those who have placements as part of their programmes.

We asked learners in each region whether they are concerned with what their ITP is called. The response was no – it’s about the environment and what they come out with at the end. However, the ability to study and train locally is important. One in three ITP students who completed our online survey said they chose their ITP because it’s close to where they live. We also heard this from iwi – they want their people to learn, live and work in their rohe (region).

However, this view wasn’t limited to just ITP education. Staff and community members told us that giving learners choices about ITPs, universities and other options, as well as the ability to move and ‘staircase’ to higher levels of study and training, encouraged them to stay in the region and give back to the community through both ako (learning) and mahi (work).

“I really feel included at every level of life [at] the polytechnic. The atmosphere is incredibly supportive and the culture extremely diverse in terms of ethnicity, socio-demographic groupings, gender and sexual diversity of fellow students”

– ITP student

“Bottom line, we are about making our communities a better place. I see ITPs as being the gateway of new learning – to be transformative. Over the years I have had the privilege of supporting numerous students on their learning journeys and many have gone on to make amazing changes within their own lives and within their wider community.”

– ITP staff member

### We heard multiple success stories

Up and down the country, people told us of the successes of individuals and their whānau through ITP study and training. These included people being the first in their family to study at tertiary level and gain a qualification, solo parents re-engaging in education to show their tamariki (children) what they too could achieve and nursing graduates from ITPs being preferred over graduates from universities.

Staff told us how they were proud to watch their students graduate, and a governor told us how they felt to see a billboard in town that had their mokopuna (grandchild) as the face of the local ITP. These successes were a source of pride for communities and the ITPs.

### International education contributes to culture, connections and a globalised environment

A number of ITPs told us of the value of the international education market. International students contribute to diverse, multicultural campuses, which in turn expose New Zealanders to more globalised learning environments. Management told us how this helps learners become global citizens and local businesses spoke of the importance of preparing people ‘to become global traders’.

Some ITPs’ successes in the international education market included creating more diversified sources of revenue by selling education products and creating partnerships offshore.

It was widely acknowledged that the ITP sector has had a growing reliance on the international market to cross-subsidise other areas of provision, with some frustration about this in view of fluctuating enrolments, difficulties with some overseas agents and changes to the post-study work rights policy.

Learners (both domestic and international) were also concerned that international students should be seen as more than just revenue, and that ITPs should support them to have great experiences and overcome the struggles of living in a foreign country.

### Many ITPs are trusted local partners that support industry and community needs

We saw many examples of ITPs meeting the economic, social and cultural needs of their region. Where this is working – whether embedded across the organisation or in pockets – ITPs are outward facing, solution seeking, active community partners. They collaborate not only where it provides a direct return for them, but to channel problems to the right place, and they help find solutions in the process. ITP staff at all levels told us that ‘we’re successful because we know our stakeholders’.

This work varied across different groups:

- › **Community members highlighted projects ITPs are involved in that contribute to community growth and development.** We heard examples of collaboration in conservation, engineering, social work, rugby clubs and local markets. An architecture firm told us about working on community parks with landscaping students from the local ITP, who in turn gained work experience and connections. We also heard that ITPs are often big employers in the region themselves.

- › **Secondary school principals and teachers were positive about partnerships where their students get exposure to practical, hands-on learning, new technologies and experienced teachers.** As one principal told us, “why would we hire a technology tutor when there’s a great one just down the road?” Trades academies and some Gateway programmes are working particularly well and provide students with a line of sight through to the ITP. School staff said this often comes down to committed individuals at ITPs building and maintaining relationships, even when the practicalities of these partnerships can be difficult.
- › **Other types of tertiary education providers sometimes collaborate with ITPs, putting aside competition.** We heard examples of ITPs working with private training establishments (PTEs) to support at-risk learners, and sharing programmes and resources with other ITPs and also industry training organisations (ITOs) on off-job components of training. Some are working on agreements, for example, one ITP was working with the local university and wānanga to channel learners into the best course of study or training for them.
- › **Industry told us that partnerships with ITPs worked when they are involved throughout the value chain and that, in turn, they provide opportunities for learners.** For example, one DHB was going to their local ITP campus to run practice interviews with its nursing students. It was helping learners feel more prepared when applying for jobs and it gave the DHB direct access to quality graduates. Some industry forums were working well and producing consistent and transferable programmes. The nature of these partnerships was naturally varied, although the feedback we received was, for the most part, about accessing recent graduates rather than supporting organisations’ current workforce.

### Behind these successes is a dedicated ITP workforce

Te amorangi ki mua, te hāpai ō ki muri – everyone’s role is important for getting the job done. To this point, we saw that the majority of ITP staff, across all roles and levels, were clearly committed to their work. We heard that:

- › **There are many passionate, highly qualified staff at ITPs with expertise in their industry or field.**
- › **Staff care about their learners.** Many staff – both support staff and teachers – will go the extra mile to support learners in their own time. For example, they’ll pick up the phone to check in on someone who has missed class. Both staff and learners see the strengths of these relationships as a key point of difference between ITPs and other tertiary education providers.
- › **Staff provide learners with knowledge and technical skills, support them to develop soft skills and help them become work ready.** For some people, this means starting with basic life skills or providing support for learning difficulties.
- › **Staff put time and energy into generating and maintaining relationships within their communities** to facilitate work experience and personal connections.
- › **Some staff expressed a particular commitment to being culturally competent** – particularly in working with Māori and also Pasifika – to support success for diverse groups of learners.

“Our local ITP has many students ranging from hairdressing right up to engineering diploma students – all these courses are necessary for our communities to function and grow. They are providing some great quality graduates”

– **Community member**

“They help me keep good staff. They provide courses that no one else does, right in the middle of town.”

– **Employer**

“The tutors often go out of their way to help students understand their assignments, and will often provide help finding work outside the institute.”

– **ITP student**

“We are still changing people’s lives, and have dedicated teaching staff who bring their real-world experience into the classroom to aid learners to understand the importance of applied research, practicality and research. Pracademics they have been, and pracademics they continue.”

– **ITP staff member**

“Applied learning is the biggest thing people are asking from us both domestically and internationally. International students are coming here to pick up particular skills for particular industries.”

– **ITP manager**

- › **Many ITPs have collaborative environments** where staff work with and care for each other.
- › **At a number of ITPs there is a good relationship overall between management and staff.** This occurs where there is shared commitment to common goals, good communication, staff involvement in decision making, and staff feel trusted and have the ability to innovate in their work.

As with learners, many staff also said to us ‘we don’t mind what we’re called so long as we’re still here’.

## The ‘how’ and ‘what’: Demonstrating the value of an ITP education

In addition to the ‘why’ and the ‘who’, we discussed the aspects of ITP provision that are working well – that is, the content of the programmes, how they are delivered and the learner outcomes.

Nursing was repeatedly highlighted by ITP management and staff as an area of high performance for their ITP. We heard that ITP nursing graduates are well prepared for work and highly sought-after. Two more general features that came up often were around the applied nature of ITP education and innovations in delivery.

ITPs can produce knowledgeable, work-ready graduates and upskill the existing workforce

People told us that some ITPs do real-world learning well. Their programmes feature practical, hands-on and applied learning that engages people in gaining knowledge and skills relevant for work. This includes applied practice capability, including learning how to learn, working with others and being prepared for an ever-changing job market and career journey. Students spoke of their satisfaction in being taught how to think and have discussions and, as a result, being able to engage and communicate confidently with new audiences.

We also heard positive feedback about commercially focused research at ITPs – although conversely, some people questioned whether ITPs should do research at all. We heard from some management teams and staff that to achieve these things pedagogy should be the fundamental starting point.

Many employers at the regional engagements, and some of the employers surveyed, were positive about the preparedness of ITP learners for work. Some emphasised the importance for them of graduates with transferable skills, saying ‘give us B-grade graduates with interpersonal and soft skills’.

We heard from learners that there are mixed levels of work exposure across ITP programmes. The nature of some courses was already closely aligned with the reality of work in that field, for example, nursing students on placements. However, some business students we talked with expressed disappointment that they weren’t making connections, such as with the local chamber of commerce or industry hubs.

## There are innovations and best-practice examples in delivery

Many ITPs are thinking about the combination of pedagogy, delivery modes and learning environments that contribute to best-practice teaching and learning, and having been making changes to how they operate over a number of years. The ‘good stuff’ we heard about includes:

- › **Cutting-edge technology enables learning**, such as use of virtual reality and augmented reality. Unitec’s virtual welding machines, which help students learn welding techniques safely and efficiently, are one example.
- › **Interdisciplinary spaces where people can come together to learn and collaborate**, such as Wintec’s Centre for Trades, where trainee automotive engineers, plumbers, joiners, carpenters, panelbeaters and others can work alongside each other.
- › **Flexible modes of delivery** such as online platforms (for example Open Polytechnic’s iQualify and TANZ eCampus), classes in marae and community centres, block courses and short courses with flexible enrolment intakes, particularly to support in-work learners.
- › **Resource sharing to increase access and choice**, for example, using materials from other ITPs so that, in essence, the local ITP is a hub of blended learning delivery.
- › **Project work with local business and communities**, for example, MIT staff in the creative arts department spoke of how they collaborate with and contribute to the local arts community.
- › **Modern spaces on campus with good facilities** were noted by several ITP students in the survey, with one commenting, “I like that it has been updated with more open spaces and is more environmentally friendly/sustainability-aware.” We note in contrast, however, that learners at other ITPs think their facilities and technology are outdated.

“[The ITP is] well-resourced with a good range of equipment that can be borrowed if you don’t have your own, an excellent library and both of these have great support.”

– **ITP student**

# What's not working well

This section looks at what people told us isn't working well enough in some places – ie, what does need to change. Four key themes were discussed:

1. Purpose and reputation of the ITP sector.
2. Challenges of the ITP operating environment.
3. Culture and people within ITPs.
4. Learner success and industry need.

## Purpose and reputation of the ITP sector: Unclear at best, unknown at worst?

We encountered loyalty and pride in the ITPs across the country. However, these sentiments were associated with the many, varied aspects of what ITPs do, and were, in places, accompanied by frustration at the sector's lack of clarity on their role, and the struggles to market themselves effectively to the public.

### ITPs are trying to be everything to everyone

The feedback and our discussions have shown people are conscious of the 'scope confusion' that has occurred at ITPs over the years. The two main reasons we heard about were changes over time to government policy and incentives that have pushed ITPs into a number of different areas of provision, and meeting the wide-ranging needs of the communities they exist to serve. As a result, ITPs now deliver everything from foundation education to doctorate programmes. This is both a help and a hindrance to the quality and sustainability of their delivery, and is confusing their brand.

People we spoke with – governors, managers, staff and employers – had mixed views about what it is that ITPs should do. For example, some think ITPs should focus only sub-degree provision and get out of anything above level 7 diplomas – or at least the master and doctorate degrees. Similarly, we heard that ITPs should not be doing research and, in the words of one staff member surveyed, should "focus on ... teaching our hands-on workforce and providing industry with confident and competent employees."

On the other side of the fence there were calls for ITPs to deliver even broader provision, stay away from being 'vocational training colleges' and extend their delivery in degree level with a practical focus.

One ITP staff member said ITPs should not have to engage in research to be able to deliver degrees<sup>1</sup>, commenting: "It is an archaic view that the critical thinking, problem-solving, self-directed learning and other abilities signified by a bachelors [degree] can only be taught by those engaged in academic research. My experience is that applied practice from the trades through to professional practice all require the application of these abilities and there is no reason why master tradespeople and professionals would be any less capable of instilling these abilities in their students."

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<sup>1</sup>The Education Act 1989 requires every programme at degree level and above at a non-university education provider to be taught mainly by staff who are actively involved in research.

Some people think there's too much focus on young people, some not enough. Some think those ITPs who offer open access to students shouldn't do so because they have too little prior achievement.

People also questioned whether ITPs should be responsible for community development beyond producing graduates, asking how far ITPs should go as 'organisations that transform society'.

Ultimately, we heard that there has been 'too much change in too many directions' for some ITPs to be truly effective.

### ITPs are not well known or understood by many, and suffer from perception problems

It is widely accepted that VET education suffers from lack of esteem. The ITP sector perhaps experiences this most closely in comparison to universities, and is seen as second choice or second rate, with brand strength in only some areas of provision. This long-standing perception issue was expressed by:

- › **Prospective learners**, for example, the 81 percent of school students in our online survey who said they plan to go to university as their first choice. Their reasons included the perception of better study options, work experience, future careers or preferences of employers, with one saying, "Because it is the expected way to head for someone with academic skills."
- › **Whānau, 'āiga, and other influencers** who don't know about or understand the opportunities available at ITPs, and place expectations or advise potential learners accordingly.
- › **Secondary schools and career advisers** who don't always understand, value and/or promote ITP pathways.
- › **The tertiary education sector** can also perpetuate this stigma, with lack of peer esteem and salary differentials for the workforce compared to university staff.

We heard from some that the label 'VET' contributes to the problem because it doesn't describe what people learn. When our survey asked what 'vocational' means, school students primarily related it to skills or employment, for example, 'Relating to an occupation or employment or education or training directed at a particular occupation and its skills,' and, 'Pathways that suit your personality, interests and skills.'

However, VET forms part of all types of tertiary education organisation (TEO) provision – and universities deliver in traditional 'vocations' such as teacher training, so this term alone doesn't explain the ITP perception issue or value proposition. People told us a lack of knowing about or trusting in the advantages of an ITP education means that learners simply default to university or, as one survey respondent put it, "Many people get sucked in by the level 7 carrot when you can do a level 6 and earn as much if not more."

## Challenges of the ITP operating environment: Competition, scale and inefficiencies

People told us about the challenges of being financially sustainable within the current policy settings, and we've documented these below. We haven't included what we heard about how settings such as funding should change in future. See [page 38](#) for more on system settings.

The tertiary sector is competing for enrolments, which is exacerbated in dispersed regions

Many people told us that the volume-based funding model isn't working in the current competitive environment, or that competitive funding doesn't work full stop. Different parts of the sector are 'eating each other's lunch' by competing for enrolments from a pool of low school-leaver numbers. As ITP provision spans such a wide range, they face competition from universities at one end and PTEs at the other.

There's also competition from the labour market, with school-leavers choosing to go straight into work, or learners leaving study for employment without completing. This plays out in a number of different ways:

- › **From a learner view, this ongoing 'EFTS<sup>2</sup> grab' means they may not be supported into the best choice of study or training** due to each TEO's desire to retain them. For example, if someone doesn't get into engineering at university, they may be encouraged by the university to choose another university programme such as science, rather than study engineering at an ITP.
- › **From an ITP sector view, a number of people expressed frustration at other ITPs delivering in their region** (out-of-region provision) – there are a number of ITPs in the Auckland market in particular.
- › **From an ITP staff view, the competition can filter down internally** to competition for EFTS allocations across departments.
- › **From a network of provision view, we heard a few considerations.** On one hand, the competition created by duplicated or overlapping provision makes it hard for providers in the market to be sustainable with their enrolment volumes. On the other hand, people questioned how we can avoid a 'lazy monopoly' with one or few providers – for example, in a small market over a dispersed region such as Northland or the West Coast of the South Island. One email submission suggested that institutions should be granted a 'degree of exclusivity' around what they are best at delivering, and that this can be done without giving them monopoly status. For learners, we heard that the current amount of choice in some provision can create confusion – but it can also provide a number of study and training pathways.

A particular area of competition that people<sup>3</sup> raised was between ITPs and ITOs. We heard that while ITOs and ITPs have different purposes and mandates, the activities of each sector have changed over time such that ITOs are straying into delivery territory, and ITPs are straying into in-work delivery – with the competitive environment creating disincentives to collaboration.

<sup>2</sup> Equivalent full-time students – the main unit used for enrolment and reporting for the tertiary education system.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that this feedback is mainly from the ITP perspective. In our public engagements on this project to-date we haven't had wide interaction with ITOs, but we have been consulting with ITO representatives through our working groups. We also heard from several ITP staff members who had previously worked at ITOs.

“Government needs to set the boundaries ... competition between ITPs/PTEs seems to be the norm, it should not be like this.”

– ITP staff member

“ITP/ITO apprentice model and funding decisions have created an ugly competitive environment that doesn't have the learner at the centre.”

– ITP staff member

“We are all small fish in a small pond competing for the same food.”

– ITP staff member

While some partnership arrangements are working well, we heard that there are some contrasting approaches between the two subsectors towards pedagogy, materials, assessment and quality assurance that can hinder collaborative activity. In one community member's view, "There are two pathways and never the two shall meet."

This can create issues in terms of meeting learner and employer needs. For the learner, it inhibits their ability to move seamlessly between different types of training as their careers evolve. From the employer perspective, the rigidity of having to work with one type of provider or the other can be confusing or frustrating.

Overall, some people across governance, management and staff were of the view that harder calls need to be made about open competition and investing in quality providers.

### ITPs struggle to reach economies of scale for small programmes

Another challenge for the ITP sector is achieving economies of scale within a one-size-fits-all funding model. People told us that, on average, ITPs require a learner-to-staff ratio of 16:1 for a course to be economically viable. Where this ratio can't be met, the costs will either be cross-subsidised from other areas of the business or the course may have to be cut. The impacts of this can be seen in recent course and campus closures across the country.

We heard, however, that it is not quite as simple as cutting unprofitable programmes:

- › **The learners and communities ITPs serve expect they will continue to offer access to study/training and choice** within their offering. We heard that, particularly in small towns, an increasingly limited offering means learners aren't able to study what they want, where they live. This may impact on their longer-term outcomes, particularly if the provision that remains is lower-level. Course cuts can also have gendered impacts where the occupation is traditionally dominated by one gender.
- › **Because of their commitment to learners and communities, ITPs may not be prepared to cut programmes in the regions** when they are a few enrolments short of break-even.
- › **Small classes are sometimes a necessity** – for example, to ensure adequate supervision for people picking up new technical skills – so ITPs cannot continue to add learners in the same way universities do.
- › **From some ITPs we heard that their areas of enrolment growth are actually out in the regions**, where numbers are small but cumulatively make a difference.
- › **We also heard that small class sizes are one of ITPs' selling points** because learners feel more engaged and supported to succeed.

The general message we received from staff was 'apply appropriate scale to ITP structure'.

Some ITP chief executives and managers said aspects of their staffing arrangements made it harder to offer low-volume programmes affordably. Issues included limits on the use of casual staff, requirements for degree-level staff to be active in research and limits on the numbers of hours and weeks that staff could teach each year.

“We constantly reinvent the wheel. There is so much potential for sharing of resources and even of teaching experiences that would reduce overall workloads and reduce costs.”

– ITP staff member

### Duplication across the sector means cost and inefficiencies

We heard that some things done 16 times around the country create unnecessary duplication and inefficiencies. This includes curriculum development, platforms (such as learning management systems) and some back-office systems. Some people told us procurement practices need to be investigated across the sector.

This area of discussion was also related to compliance activities such as reporting. One ITP staff member told us in the survey that “time that once was used to plan and keep up with new ideas is often taken with more bean-counting tasks. For example, in the last 10 years we have gone from two administration systems to track students and grades to six.” There is more detail on this in the section [Feedback on the system](#) on page 38.

## Culture and people: The wairua of staff and students at some ITPs

Under the Education Act 1989, ITPs are autonomous institutions. This means they are responsible for managing day-to-day operations, not the Government. This includes building and supporting an effective workforce and ensuring students have a strong representative voice.

At some ITPs we visited, the staff and students were engaged, supported and happy overall. At others there were varying degrees of frustration, dissatisfaction and anger for a number of different reasons.

### Staff are change-weary

ITP staff told us they have experienced ongoing change, including through restructures, mergers and transformation projects. Where there are job losses, it’s often the casual, non-academic staff that are let go first, for example, learner support, outreach and enrolments. When staff lose their job or leave, remaining staff are often covering multiple roles because new people aren’t hired, and they may feel pressured to do more for the sake of students.

Many staff spoke of the stress it creates only having job certainty for six months at a time – although contrastingly, we heard in some places this is an accepted part of the norm, and staff take on the role with this in mind. In addition to stress, this change is affecting the mental and physical health of staff, their wellbeing and job satisfaction. These changes can, in turn, impact on students, including the services available to them.

“We have lots of scar tissue but it’s stronger than skin.”

– ITP staff member

The common grievance in change processes across ITPs was that staff feel excluded from involvement in consultation, decision making and rebuilding culture – or, as one person put it, the “people journey”. We heard from staff that ‘decisions should be made as close as possible to the people who have to implement them’. Some staff have found it difficult to speak up and don’t feel listened to by management.

We heard that, as a result of these processes, it can be hard to maintain and grow a sense of collective identity at an ITP. Many staff talked of their resilience and desire to continue in their job, but want to see change in this area.

In our discussions with management and governance, there was acknowledgement of the change staff across the sector are experiencing. They also provided views on the opportunities they see to enable a more sustained, satisfied and reinvigorated ITP workforce. Their ideas are outlined from [page 31](#).

## ITPs should be an education institution before a business

There was also some frustration from staff who feel there is an imbalance between the focus on ITPs as education providers, and the running of a business. One staff member said, “Tertiary education is not a business. It is a community-funded institution to provide tertiary education opportunities in the community.” There is a feeling from some that the language of management is too heavily focused on products and profit. Some learners also mentioned this, but mainly out of concern that the quality of their education continues to be the main focus.

## Student representation models are still being developed and embedded in some places

There is a mixed picture across the ITP sector of student consultation and involvement in decision making. Where it’s working well, there seems to be a ‘golden triangle’ of motivated student representatives, management and staff that listen to and involve students and formal structures and systems for student representation.

The sector is at different stages of developing and embedding models that place high importance on learners contributing to continuous improvement. Student bodies are also at different stages of developing their own councils and being involved at a national level.

Where it isn’t working well, learners mentioned some key things they feel should change, including that ITPs need to:

- › **value learners’ knowledge and ideas**, and create an environment where they are comfortable speaking up
- › **commit to putting formal structures in place** so it’s not just something students drive forward
- › **share policies and information** much more widely with learners so they are well-informed and can provide useful feedback
- › **ensure student feedback is taken on board** so people know their views are being considered
- › **resource student support services well**, not only so they are effective but to take the pressure off student representatives who may be trying to support other learners without the tools or time to help.

## There are some other key issues affecting the learner experience

Some of the main issues learners told us about are:

- › **increasing mental health, stress and wellbeing problems**
- › **access barriers**, such as high course and materials fees, transport, internet and devices and inflexible class hours
- › **disruptions to their learning** during change processes
- › **outdated technologies and facilities** on campus.

Some of these are looked at in more detail in the section [What needs to change or improve](#) on page 25.

## Learner success and industry need

While ITPs are producing many positive outcomes for the learners, communities and industries in their regions, people also told us there are some fundamental things that aren't working well enough, to varying degrees and in different areas, across all ITPs.

### There is too much learner churn

We know sometimes a student needs to do more than one foundation qualification before they are ready to move to higher-level study or training, or get started or back onto a career path. We also heard that sometimes people with degrees will want to come and study a level 5 or 6 qualification in a more applied area.

However, people told us that the amount of churn needs to be addressed. We heard that some learners move repeatedly in and out of work, on and off benefits and between courses, leading to limited employment opportunities. Ideally, they need to be on sustainable pathways working towards higher levels of study.

The onboarding of learners is an area for improvement, including improved use of recognition of prior learning (RPL) and more tailored advice about the right course of study or training, at the right place. This process should also address undermatching (ie, where someone enrolls in a qualification at the same or a lower level than they already have), so people with level 3 or 4 qualifications aim higher. Some management and staff were also of the view that 'EFTS chase' creates the wrong incentives for ITPs to do what's right by the learner.

### ITPs aren't always meeting the needs of Māori

The issues around meeting the needs of ākonga Māori, whānau and iwi are outlined in the section [What we heard from Māori](#) on page 43, but we provide some additional feedback we heard from our wider engagements here:

- › **From different management teams: From a mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) perspective, ITPs are 'not meeting iwi needs and iwi are getting frustrated'.** They told us many iwi want their people to learn and live in their takiwā (region), and stay once they have graduated. ITPs need to work more closely with Māori to meet their needs, and not view them as nice-to-haves. This includes engaging with iwi and hapū over the best ways to create arrangements and understandings, and engaging with them at different levels, under the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi).
- › **From management and staff: To create an environment where Māori can learn as Māori, they need to take a whole-system approach,** which is not just about improving pastoral care.
- › **From learners: They want dedicated Māori spaces at ITPs, and staff who have understanding of local tikanga and dialect.**

“We have too many people in our classes and flood the market with graduates. We are sometimes disconnected with our communities and should work alongside MSD, ACC, high schools and industry in a much more streamlined, thoughtful fashion.”

– ITP staff member

“You can confuse theory with practice – what you actually do is important.”

– ITP manager on improving success for Māori

## There are skills shortages, mismatches and gaps in local labour markets

The feedback from people in this area included an acknowledgement that meeting industry needs is not a one-way street – there are challenges employers may face and/or exacerbate when it comes to matching ITP supply with labour market demand. However, many people across all groups thought we have a largely supply-driven model that can better meet industry need. We heard from employers and community members that:

- › **There isn't enough meaningful industry input** into what ITP programmes are needed and their course design. This is sometimes on the employer, as industry doesn't always take responsibility for providing input but expects ITPs to deliver a 'packaged-product' graduate they don't have to develop any further – and are then frustrated when they have to do 'rework'. However, we heard that ITPs are not doing enough in some areas to seek feedback and input from a range of employers, and make ongoing provision adjustments to respond to industry need.
- › **There are skills shortages** – both technical and transferable. Employers can struggle to fill jobs with local workers because they may lack the right work ethic, foundation skills, paperwork, identification, driver licences and more.
- › **There isn't always speed to market for products** when ITPs and industry do collaborate, of which government processes are a common barrier (see [page 39](#) for more detail).
- › **Tertiary solutions can lack flexibility for industry** – such as qualifications not being short enough or found locally.
- › **Engagement lacks coordination and consistency**, particularly with small business. There's some targeted collaboration between ITPs and big firms, but people told us how tricky it can be for small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and ITPs to engage with each other, and that innovative, non-conventional mechanisms to enable this engagement are lacking. We also heard, as previously mentioned, that while there are some great relationships between ITPs and industry, these often come down to committed individuals and are lost if they leave the role.

“The difficulty we have with ITPs is that the quality of the training varies. In part this seems to be because there is a shortage, and therefore a huge variation in the quality, of tutors.”

– **Community member**

“We have no communication on the progress of students hence the reason we 99% [of the time] work with ITOs.”

– **Employer**

# What needs to change or improve

This section looks at what we heard in response to the question ‘how do you think what your ITP does, or how it does it, should change over the next decade?’

We cover:

- › **The ‘why’:** Shifting to greater regional transformation, lifting the sector’s brand.
- › **The ‘how’ and ‘what’:** Skills for the future and models of learning.
- › **The ‘who’:** Improvements for students, staff and the workforce model.

## The ‘why’: Shifting to greater regional transformation, lifting the sector’s brand

People told us that ITPs exist to serve the individuals, whānau, 'āiga, families, communities, iwi and industries in their region. While many ITPs have long-standing, valuable connections throughout their regions, some are struggling to meet their stakeholders’ needs.

### Coordinated regional transformation is needed

We heard from communities, governance, management and staff that ITPs can be transformative and should play a key part in lifting the prosperity of regions and cities. We also heard that effective regional transformation requires good coordination between regional economic development agencies, industry, government agencies, iwi, community groups and the education system – with each having clear roles, responsibilities and commitment to some shared outcomes.

One management team told us that, for communities, this is about ‘making shifts in key regional indicators of wellbeing’, and another said that for industry, it’s about ‘being in the business of workforce development’.

In terms of the roles ITPs play, people told us there is no one-size-fits-all for the problems, demographics, environment and culture of each region, and that ITPs should be able to adapt to meet what each region needs. A community member said, “In one place this will mean competition to create economic growth, in another it’s about coordinated efforts to tackle poverty.”

People told us ITPs need to change by:

- › **Partnering more with different parts of the education sector** to create seamless transitions for people through, and back into, the system.
- › **Working with industry and government** to understand future areas of high growth in industries and technologies, and their social implications. Discussion is also needed around how the tertiary sector must shift its provision to support the labour force. This includes actively supporting transition economies, which was front-of-mind during our discussions with governance and management at Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki, in particular.

“[The role of the ITP is] provision of tertiary education to support the needs of the workforce within the region we operate. To provide skills to those within our communities that need it most via meaningful connections between ITP, student, schools, and relevant government agencies (eg, Work and Income).”

– ITP staff member

- › **Expanding their regional reach** to help sustain and grow isolated areas, and enhancing regional specialisation. For example, staff on the West Coast of the South Island told us they ‘could have a hub of outdoor instruction and guiding’ there.
- › **Reducing duplication and miscoordination**, not just within the ITP sector, but across government agencies, community and industry. We heard that at one ITP there are over 30 agencies involved in the Youth Guarantee space in their region, and to make an impact, collective and systematic change is needed.

ITPs need to be more outward facing, and community and industry driven

Community members told us they want ITPs to:

- › **Support the capability of communities** by growing things that work with local input.
- › **Understand and support social change and mobility.** We heard that it can be challenging for people to work through the change in their lives when they start to succeed in education then sometimes become different from the people around them.
- › **Be active, solutions-focused community partners** that go out into the community regularly and adapt to meet their needs.
- › **Maintain support for learners when they’re off-campus**, for example, during their work placements and internships, or if their study is predominantly in-work.

“Change is escalating. Let’s bring the whole community with us.”

– **Community member**

Many of these stakeholders noted that people in the community want to contribute to their local ITP as well as benefit from it.

Employers told us they want ITPs to:

- › **Understand the SME environment better** and help coordinate meaningful, sustained engagement. This includes helping industry understand what their needs are from tertiary education. Some people suggested industry precincts or hubs as places where the groups can come together.
- › **Adapt more to industry cycles, peaks and flows and seasonal work** with provision that responds to changing industry need. This includes providing flexible programmes – not just their length, but how and when they are delivered to fit around workers’ schedules.
- › **Respond more quickly to niche and emerging industries**, with one example in Auckland being new permeable paving technology.
- › **Help them plan for future growth and create pipelines of skilled workers.** Horticulture was one area where employers told us they need to plan for growth. For examples such as this, they’d like ITPs to work with them to spot emerging trends and drive new programmes one year out to get a pipeline of learners engaged. A staff member backed this up by commenting on the importance of VET education for supporting economic growth: “Look forward to new approaches and recognise that the role of vocational education becomes even more important in comparison to university academic education.”

“The system needs to be outward facing, genuinely innovative and collaborative.”

– **ITP governor**

“ITPs’ competitive advantage needs to be their link to industry.”

– **Community member**

As mentioned in previous sections, many employers we spoke with acknowledged that these relationships are two-way. Some suggested ITPs should put the ‘increased productivity’ argument more strongly to industry as an incentive for their early involvement in programme design and providing work experience to potential employees.

There needs to be firmer commitment and action around working with Māori

We heard that there are a number of ways ITPs can shift to be more responsive to the needs of Māori. These are outlined in detail in the section [What we heard from Māori](#) on page 43.

People across the groups we spoke to highlighted that, over the next decade, Aotearoa will continue to move into a post-Treaty settlement environment. Iwi are looking increasingly at how the education system should meet the needs of rangatahi (youth) and Māori in the workforce, and increasingly want to know how they can partner with TEOs to lift Māori success in ako and mahi.

We heard that the ITP sector can build more enduring relationships, enable Māori to lead the kōrero about what’s best for them and improve its practices to better support Māori achievement.

ITPs can reject deficit mentalities

ITPs can push back against the various deficit mentalities surrounding:

“[ITPs] need to learn how to defend their patch.”

– **Community member**

- › **Learners**, by recognising learners’ existing skills, and creating not just aspirations but expectations. Students said this includes learning it’s OK to fail and how to be resilient. Staff supported this, saying they want to feel safe to fail learners who haven’t yet reached the right skill levels.
- › **Regions**, by shifting the language from what they’re lacking, to their strengths. Management acknowledged this is long, difficult work and that even different communities within regions have varying aspiration levels.
- › **ITPs themselves**, in some cases. Several community members commented that ITPs need to show more pride in their identity and ‘sell their value proposition’ to learners, as do universities.

ITPs can build a stronger sector brand

While building a stronger sector brand and changing public perception will be a long road, we heard from community and industry that there are aspects of ITPs’ value-add that can be promoted, marketed and sold as points of difference. A number of ITPs’ governance, management and staff also said they have strong identity and brand association which shouldn’t be lost, and can be used to build the sector’s reputation as a whole. ITPs could make change in this area by promoting:

“ITPs should be a first choice for many, not a short straw.”

– **ITP staff member**

- › **The benefits of careers open to ITP graduates.** ITPs should promote the financial success of their graduates, who may earn more than graduates from other sectors, sooner after completing. We discussed with one group that the view of agricultural work in their region is about a decade out of date, and prospective learners (whether post-school or in work) need to see they can be snapped up into a successful career with opportunities for ongoing progression and promotion.

- › **The personalised, value-add teaching and learning.** A staff member said in the online survey, “I believe there will always be a market for engaged and inspirational, customised teaching as opposed to anonymous and standardised... This will be an important differentiator for ITPs in the future.”
- › **The productivity gain to industry.** One staff member said, “We think we increase productivity in a different way [to other sectors]” – a sentiment echoed by some employers. As outlined above, people suggested ITPs show industry that by collaborating they can produce skilled graduates that are ready to start or continue in work.
- › **That they’re different to other sectors.** Staff told us ITPs should differentiate themselves rather than trying to be ‘second-rate universities’.

## The ‘how’ and ‘what’: Skills for the future and models of learning

We received feedback on the types of tertiary education learners will need in future to meet their own, industry and community needs, and how aspects of the delivery can improve.

ITPs need to focus on skills rather than subjects

One staff member surveyed echoed the feedback of many by commenting, “To ensure students are able to be active in the workforce we need to produce work-ready people. That means having good social skills as well as technical skills ... [This] also benefits the wider community.”

The emphasis on people obtaining soft and transferable skills as well as technical expertise is not new, as outlined in the feedback on what’s working for learners. However, we heard that over the coming decade ITPs should focus more on skill acquisition because:

- › **People will increasingly need to adapt to the future of work.** Some jobs and industries will become obsolete, and new ones will emerge. People will need to be adaptive and resilient so they can upskill and retrain to stay in work. They’ll also need new types of literacies as part of a broad curriculum, such as digital literacy. People noted that ITPs will need to find ways to deliver to adults in ways that fit around their work and family commitments.
- › **Māori and Pasifika will require greater responsiveness** to developing the skills of their youth populations and existing workforce. Some Māori and Pasifika communities have fast-growing youth populations and they’ll need skills to tap into future jobs in growing and emerging areas. For both younger and older Māori and Pasifika, we also heard that it’s important people be prepared to move out of areas of work as they are automated. Māori and Pasifika workers are currently over-represented in jobs susceptible to automation.
- › **Industry and communities are asking for higher-level skills.** In relation to the changing nature of work, we heard that more people should be trained in supervisor and manager roles that require level 5-6 qualifications. Industry spoke of an immediate need for management expertise in prominent or growth industries such as science, conservation and agriculture. Taking a longer term perspective, in the words of one person, “there are skills that robots won’t have that can be the focus of what ITPs teach,” such as negotiation, decision making and influencing.

“The core role of ITPs is to educate and train learners in an applied manner to train them for jobs that exist in the near and medium term: that is to be able to contribute to the economy, to their communities, to local businesses in the workplace and to bring in new skills relevant to traditional, current and emerging technologies... Our focus is on local provision to retain the skills we need today in our communities and to provide opportunities for learners to learn without having to uproot their families.”

– ITP staff member

“Prepare students for the workforce and skills to be adaptable to the working world – a combination of how to do current jobs but enough broader skill to be able to think and adapt in new situations”

– ITP staff member

“We need to provide upskilling opportunities for the existing workforce working around hybrid jobs that are emerging.”

– ITP manager

“More support for older returning students, especially women, mothers looking to upskill.”

– ITP student

› **People may have more portfolio careers and change their career path more often.**

- We heard that some people are starting to choose a number of different jobs to create a portfolio career that allows variety and flexibility in their schedules and throughout their working lives. Or in some cases, it’s the only way they can create a liveable income. They need to be able to apply their skills to each job and switch between them.
- From an industry point of view, we also heard that they need greater flexibility in upskilling workers for seasonal work across different industries throughout the year. A group of employers asked us, ‘what model would support learners picking up skills across multiple disciplines at once?’ This would benefit employers in knowing they can rely on people’s skillsets, and employees in being more able to rely on regular work throughout different seasons.

- › The sector could be a forefront contributor to skills in emerging technologies. Some community members talked about the potential for ITPs to grow New Zealand’s innovation capability. This will require staff who can pick up capability in these technologies – currently, as we heard from a number of learners, some staff struggle to use (and therefore teach others how to use) the latest technology and equipment.

Learning needs to be much closer to work

We heard from many people that more ITPs should occupy the space of upskilling and retraining people in, and for, the workforce throughout their careers in a ‘hop-on, hop-off’ fashion. This means learning that is integrated with work and flexible to work schedules. In some cases, this will have the added benefit for ITPs of teaching with technologies already in workplaces, which can change often and are costly to invest in.

From a learner and community perspective, this is also important for creating the win-win of people being able to learn and work at the same time. We heard often that people should not have to sacrifice earning a living and providing for their whānau in order to learn or train.

Learning should occur throughout people’s lives

Aotearoa has an ageing population and people are predicted to stay in work longer in future. The ages of ITP learners are already more diverse than other parts of the tertiary education sector. However, people told us that the ITP sector can better encourage and provide lifelong learning to support the workforce ‘dipping in and out’ of education as their careers change.

We heard that lifelong learning, and support for older learners generally, is also important because:

- › **some parents, particularly mothers, need flexible learning options** to help them back into the workforce after parental leave
- › **older learners create intergenerational success** by encouraging their tamariki and mokopuna into study and training
- › **lifelong learning creates vibrant communities** with inclusive, engaged populations.

## ITPs will need to diversify models of teaching and learning

We heard that, over the next decade, ITPs will need to make a number of changes to how they deliver education so they can be more responsive to the changing needs of learners. Alongside this, we received a great deal of feedback on what would need to change about the system – such as funding models and rules – to enable or incentivise the ITP sector to make these changes. The latter is detailed in the section [Feedback on the system](#) on page 38.

Across the country we heard that the ITP sector could improve how they deliver through:

- › **Pedagogy as the starting point**, so learner goals, outcomes and cultural considerations guide how teaching and learning occurs.
- › **Using recognition of prior learning (RPL) more effectively** to help learners build on their existing strengths and complete their programme more efficiently. We note here the feedback from ITPs that the RPL process can be complicated and costly.
- › **Blended delivery models**, with online learning being just one component. Project-based learning and collaboration often came up as a good example. In terms of online delivery, people told us the experience should be authentic, culturally relevant, well supported and use technology as an enabler to transform learning. Online learning works better for some people than others, as does self-directed learning.
- › **Short courses and developing micro-credentials** to meet specific industry need and allow people to upskill quickly.
- › **Pick and mix qualifications** where learners can build individualised programmes to suit their needs. People told us this would ideally be not only from one provider, but a combination of courses from many – but still accessed in one place.
- › **Flexible study** including part-time, night classes and weekend options. The range of options should reflect that all learners have different needs.
- › **Pathways with a clear line of sight** so learners can progress to higher levels of study and training and into, or back into, work. Several staff members and community stakeholders suggested learners could benefit from qualification pathways that ‘build as they go’ – almost in a gamified way – because once a learner experiences initial success it can motivate them to do more.

## Investment is needed in two key areas

**The first is people.** We heard from staff in particular that more resource is required, not less, to achieve these changes. Staff members’ comments were similar to that of this survey respondent, who suggested ITPs need “more resourcing to be able to attract the staff we need from industry, and to have the resources that ensure a quality learning experience.”

Management told us that attracting quality people to the ITP workforce can be difficult because of competition from other industries, pay differentials to the private sector and the need to find people with the right mix of technical, interpersonal and teaching skills. We heard that ITPs’ reliance on individuals to do a mix of academic, course design, teaching and pastoral care work increased the difficulty of finding staff who were strong in all the areas they needed to be.

“You’ll reinvent yourselves five or six times in your career now; from the education point of view we need to be fleet of foot.”

– **ITP governor**

“Our constraint is our inability to meet demand for highly flexible, compartmentalised learning and micro-credentials.”

– **ITP governor**

“We could improve our online delivery – this is a major development in how people learn, and while we already do this, we need to keep innovating to meet the needs for online and distance learning.”

– **ITP staff member**

“Agility and flexibility need to be built into systems to accommodate the changing nature of the employment market and communities that ITPs serve.”

– **ITP staff member**

“With the uncertainty of jobs ... many students are very concerned about how to deal with the courses we will take in tertiary education as we are all very aware some courses may become redundant soon. Any support through this would be much appreciated.”

– **Person considering tertiary study**

Access and isolation can also be off-putting for people considering jobs in the regions. Management teams and governance, and some staff and students, also commented on how they could increase the flexibility of the ITP workforce in future to meet people’s needs. These ideas are outlined further on [page 33](#).

#### **The second area investment is needed is facilities and infrastructure.**

A number of people across all groups talked about the need for quality facilities, spaces and systems – particularly IT upgrades. This includes quality learning spaces outside the classroom where people can collaborate, and online spaces. It also includes the use of data and analytics, which is detailed in [Ideas for the future ITP network model](#) on page 35.

A view from one governance team was that the difficulty around investing in assets is less about securing the capital upfront and more about managing the risks associated with it. They want a degree of assurance that government will continue to support them if things go wrong – while acknowledging ‘we shouldn’t invest in things that will be obsolete in five years’.

At the same time, we heard from many people that ITPs should extend their delivery through pre-existing sites that have internet access and good facilities, such as schools, marae and community centres. There will not be a one-size-fits-all solution – each ITP should make decisions based on its region’s unique needs and resources.

The ability to take risks was also raised by staff and management more generally, who said they would like the funding system to support ITPs to trial and test new things, with the understanding that some may not work.

### **The ‘who’: Improvements for students, staff and the workforce model**

In order for the ITP sector to change, and continue to adapt in future, people at all levels need to be involved. We heard that the way some ITPs operate isn’t working for learners and staff.

Learners should be at the centre, with good support throughout their journey

We heard that learners, and sometimes their whānau, want to be ‘affirmed as being at the heart of ITPs’. They want the organisation striving to organise itself around their needs and preferences, rather than them having to fit around the ITP. Learners want to have formal representation throughout all levels of the institution, and be able to participate and provide feedback in a number of ways – and see their input is valued and used to make ongoing improvements.

This includes tailored approaches for different groups, including Māori, Pasifika, international students, refugees and people with disabilities.

When ITPs go through change, we heard that they should be more transparent, provide clear, timely communications, listen to feedback and help learners adapt to changes in systems, processes, resources and services.

Learners talked about creating more vibrant experiences and campus cultures with events and extra-curricular opportunities. They spoke of the importance of having dedicated spaces where they can learn and hang out together, and safe, modern facilities. Learners at several sites – especially those working part time in the early evenings – said they wished they could have swipe card access to more campus spaces at nights and weekends to make better use of study, printing and library facilities.

We also heard about the importance of good information, pastoral care and a wide range of support services – from where to seek help for addictions, through to essay referencing. These should stay with them throughout their time at the ITP and key transition points. Learners should receive active support – both academic and non-academic – because they may not know how to ask for help, or know what they need help with. One student told us in the survey that they needed “more people to help with learning difficulties.”

Many learners said staff will need better resourcing for this kind of support to be effective.

### Learners need ongoing career advice

People across all groups suggested ways career education and services can be improved, including:

- › **Working with schools early on** to provide exposure to ITP learning and career information, and bridge the transition from secondary into tertiary study and training.
- › **Hiring high-quality career advisers** who understand and promote the value of ITP and VET education.
- › **Focusing on career aspirations** with prospective and current learners, not the qualification, and helping them explore their options. Some people spoke highly of individual learning plans for each student.
- › **Involving parents, whānau and 'āiga** to help create understanding and shift any preconceptions about ITP education.
- › **Brokering work experience** and connections between learners and employers.
- › **Providing ongoing career guidance** and helping learners build the skills to research and plan their own pathways.

Career education is also a key theme detailed in the section [What we heard from Pasifika](#) on page 47.

### The sector needs strong governance and management

In terms of governance, ITP council members told us that to govern effectively they need the right mix of skillsets around the table. Some people suggested there should be a well-trained board of governors who are responsible for several ITPs to enable collaboration.

For management, people told us that executive leaders should get out and about to listen and talk to people more – including ITP staff and learners – so they can build relationships and create partnerships. We heard that executive leadership should build a clear vision, organisational direction and culture with staff actively involved. Staff also said they want good communication about how management operates. They emphasised that good communication means listening as well as talking.

“Since my role is [in] career planning and disabilities, I hope that ITPs like ours will see that we need to be more supportive to both students transitioning into tertiary, and students transitioning out into careers and other study.”

– ITP staff member

“Have the senior executive actually engaged with the operations of the ITP. Reduce the huge gulf between senior management and the Schools. Clarify roles and regions instead of [a] confusing wide matrix management ... require Deans and [the] senior executive to engage with students.”

– ITP staff member

“[We want to] be acknowledged for the work we do, to feel valued and ensure equitability for all.”

– **ITP staff member**

“Opportunities to contribute and be part of the change within the organisation.”

– **ITP staff member**

“As a technology employer, I know that advances in automation, AI, robotics etc. are and will change our workforce. The quicker ITPs can adapt to this change, the more beneficial for students and employers.”

– **Employer**

We also heard from people across all groups that there should be greater accountability at both the governance and management levels for when things go wrong.

Staff should be valued, engaged and contributing to change

We heard that many ITPs should value all staff more, and demonstrate this by involving them in planning, decision making and growing culture and values. To achieve this, staff told us it is important ITPs create a culture where they feel safe to speak up, are listened to and their feedback is acted upon. This requires two-way communication between management and staff, transparency and trust building. Where this was present, staff were highly engaged and satisfied with their work.

We heard that transformation processes must bring staff along so they can be part of the change.

Staff also told us they want their skills to be used, and ideas encouraged, with the freedom to innovate and create value for the organisation. In addition, both management and staff want ITPs to be great places to work, and people told us that the staff experience – both in their mahi and socially – can be improved just as the learner experience can.

The ITP workforce can become more flexible and reimagine its role

Staff, students, management and governance told us the ITP workforce will need to shift and adapt for the sector to diversify how it delivers teaching and learning, support students effectively and better respond to industry and community needs. People told us there are a number of opportunities, ranging from more flexible working hours to reorganising the workforce model. Much of this discussion was around how the role of teachers and tutors might change, both to adapt to student demands and new ways of learning, and create a sector that is more efficient without compromising quality.

We heard that, in future, many people think the role of the teacher will need to shift (as in some cases it already has) from being the ‘sage on the stage’ to the ‘guide on the side’ – that is, from someone who largely imparts knowledge to working alongside students and trainees to help them pick up skills, learn about how they learn and work to individualised plans. People told us teachers’ roles should evolve as learning models become increasingly diverse.

One ITP staff member commented, “Our role as teachers is phasing out and we are becoming facilitators of the process.” It was noted this requires a specific skillset many ITP staff will need support to acquire – it may not be something people naturally know how to do as a result of being an expert in their field or having been at the front of a classroom for a long time.

As models of learning become more flexible to people’s needs, teachers may increasingly be expected to be more flexible as well. Delivery during evenings and weekends may become the new normal for increasing numbers of ITP teaching staff. We heard that many staff are either already teaching differentiated hours, or, as a staff member told us, “we are ready to be flexible,” but the norm is still for delivery during traditional school hours. We heard from some management and governance teams that, despite the potential for greater flexibility, most staff still prefer to work Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm as their normal hours and have resisted attempts at changing this, except on a by-exception basis for short periods of time.

ITP management we spoke with are aware staff are both their most valuable asset and biggest cost. Both management and staff told us staff need more relevant, and value-add professional development and opportunities. One manager spoke of small campuses in the regions where staff may be doing multiple roles and mean everything to the learners there. We also heard from management, staff and learners that workload is an issue.

Looking to the future, the main changes management teams said they would like to explore are:

- › **Greater flexibility in practice**, with teachers and tutors who are happy to work different hours to enable more diverse delivery.
- › **A more mixed workforce composition.** We heard that some ITPs struggle to recruit all-rounder staff. Some managers saw an opportunity to address this challenge by employing a mix of staff members focused on different activities, such as bringing in specific industry experts on short-term contracts to work alongside a trained teacher, and/or using dedicated support staff to provide pastoral care for learners. This would involve replacing some full-time permanent roles with multiple part-time or casualised roles. In some cases, employment agreements with existing staff make this kind of change expensive or difficult.
- › **Reorganising the workforce to disaggregate the value chain** in some cases. This would involve specialist staff for designing courses, producing materials, assessment and tracking learner progress. The Open Polytechnic has been highlighted to us as one organisation that has recently undergone this change.

Many teaching staff were supportive of giving up some parts of their role (in particular, administration, and programme design and approvals) to enable them to spend more time on meeting learner, community and industry needs. They told us they need to retain the ability to adapt delivery to their locality and learners, but did not need to design the basic curriculum from scratch and go through an NZQA approval process for their unique programme, as many currently do. Some people were concerned about disaggregating the value chain – for example, not marking assessments that give them insights into learner progress.

We also heard concerns about the short-term nature of contracts in some places, and contrastingly, the expectation this is the norm from others. It seemed that what matters is staff continue to be involved in change and ITPs invest in their knowledge and experience. As one staff member told us, “We are already reinventing ourselves – but give us time to do it.”

“Need to depart from the 9-5 working day, not the best way to support our diverse range of learners.”

– ITP staff member

“Our role as teachers is phasing out and we are becoming facilitators of the process – like a boundary rider looking after the students and apprentices. Classroom work in trades is phasing out with a much bigger focus on the outcomes of the practical work – so a lot more work managing the online environment the students and apprentices are working in, and also guiding them in obtaining the practical skills that they need to do their work.”

– ITP staff member

## Ideas for the future ITP network model

“I would like to see campuses used as places to facilitate learning experiences in programmes from various ITPs. For example, nursing or hairdressing programmes can be managed in one or two ITPs and facilitated over a number of campuses over the country. This would save administrative and development time, time and money auditing programmes and would be less confusing for agencies facilitating clinical placements as all paperwork and expectations would be aligned.”

– ITP staff member

“Autonomy must not change; self-direction and leadership must not change; student-centred learning must not change.”

– ITP staff member

People told us what could change structurally to the ITP network that would create efficiencies and improve quality. One aspect of discussions centred on the fundamental decision-making rights ITP management, staff and governance should retain for their communities, as part of exploring what could usefully be centralised in the sector and what might not work. We also received ideas on models to explore, and advice on lessons learned from previous ITP mergers.

Centralise or share some things and increase collaboration, but maintain local diversity and ownership

People suggested the following might be more centralised, standardised or shared in common across the ITP network:

- › **Curriculum and qualification development.** This wouldn't need to stop institutions or companies developing some specialist qualifications, or adapting existing programmes to meet local needs. It was widely agreed that sharing generic programme content across ITPs is a no-brainer. Some cautioned that speed and responsiveness could be compromised. Most academic staff said they still want to be able to innovate in how they deliver the programmes to retain local diversity and responsiveness.
- › **Business systems** such as student management systems (SMS) and learning management systems (LMS).
- › **Some services (and their procurement)** such as libraries, research databases, pastoral care and mentoring apps.
- › **Marketing of the ITP brand and vision for the ITP network**, especially to build an NZ Inc. overseas reputation.
- › **Pooling capital expenditure** to enable some combined purchasing power – and perhaps shared expertise in asset management across the network.
- › **Data analytics software** to put a focus on capability, understanding and using data to provide targeted support to learners and inform decision making. Others suggested 'central planning of student numbers linked to industry need' to match the supply of graduates nationwide to the expected labour market demand.

The key thing people told us was that centralisation should not come at the expense of local autonomy and responsiveness. ITP management and staff said they want to be able to maintain and improve what they offer, respond to the needs of their stakeholders and celebrate local culture – not just in main centres, but further out into the regions as well.

In general, we also heard that the network should work together on the better utilisation of assets, and greater sharing of information, best practice and curriculum content. At the same time, it was acknowledged that incentives need to be in place, and disincentives, such as competition, need to be removed or overcome. One ITP governor said, “The right incentives to enable smart, responsive collaboration would make a huge difference.”

## Explore different approaches to learning, leadership, structures and funding

The main ideas and considerations people put forward were:

- › **ITPs as learning hubs.** One staff member summarised it as “brokers of education with customised pastoral care”. Learning hubs would shift the conception of ITPs to spaces where learners, multiple tertiary providers, business, community and other stakeholders can come together to collaborate. These hubs should have good supporting infrastructure, particularly transport and internet solutions. The main benefits of these hubs would be:
  - a learner can walk in and study anything through the hub
  - regional reach could extend through use of multiple delivery sites, which may also create job opportunities
  - ITPs create savings by facilitating learning in their space, rather than having to do everything themselves.
- › **Much more use of quality online learning** as part of the network – one email submission suggested “ITPs without walls”. Several submitters suggested that fully online learning (ie, delivery by distance with no mandatory face-to-face or real-time contact) is a specialist activity requiring dedicated programme development and resourcing, not something an ITP should treat as an “add on” to its face-to-face or blended delivery.
- › **Centres of Excellence** at some or all ITPs, which lead in their areas of specialisation. This was suggested by a number of staff. One email submission cautioned these centres shouldn’t necessarily mean learners have to move regions for their preferred choice of study or training.
- › **Diversifying ITP revenue streams**, with suggestions such as consultancies and offshore delivery.
- › **Reimagining work structures**, for example, by sharing teaching resource more across an area, either via online video calling or travel between campuses. There were some mixed views on whether this is an effective solution for face-to-face teaching in the regions, especially for new tertiary learners in the first month or two of their programmes.
- › **Shrinking and strengthening governance and leadership.** Some people thought fewer councils and executive teams would strengthen the sector. In terms of leadership further out in the regions, we heard that campus managers for regional outposts work well, usually when the managers are known locally, understand the community and have real influence over what gets delivered and how.
- › **Carefully considering iwi.** People told us that, for mergers or other changes, a key consideration and point of collaboration needs to be on how they impact on iwi partners of the institutions.
- › **Including other sectors in structural change.** One staff member suggested to “remove ITOs and combine with TEOs to provide regional focus.” Another suggested a dual sector university-ITP model, such as the Queensland example of a national university of technology, to “drive innovation and third-party funding, and strengthen the applied nature of provision.”

“We will get ‘noise for the sake of noise’ if we aim for big change – lots of people have a lot invested in aspects of the status quo.”

– **Māori stakeholder**

“Everyone should be no further than a 30-minute drive from somewhere they can learn.”

– **Community member**

- › **Looking to other sectors and overseas** examples for potential models, such as health, or the various TAFE structures in Australia.

There is much we can learn from previous change processes

We also received kupu āwhina (advice) from people reflecting on recent ITP mergers, such as Ara, Toi Ohomai and the strategic partnership between WelTec and Whitireia. The key things people told us were:

- › **There has to be a really strong value proposition.**
- › **“A decision has to be made and then we need to get on with it,”** said one ITP governor.
- › **Focus on culture and bring people with you** – involve staff and learners in the change process. Managers and leaders should not assume they can find the right answers to detailed design questions on their own. They should set the high-level parameters and then use the ‘wisdom of the crowd’ to help fine-tune the design. We heard that this would improve staff buy-in to the change as well as smooth the implementation path.
- › **There is a lot of cost and time involved in integrating systems.** They may create efficiencies, but it won’t save money.
- › **Retain the good bits of the institutions merging** – especially connections, relationships and cultural capital you’ll need to start building new mahi, brand and reputation. It will take a while for the new institution to get going, because ‘perceptions drive choice and they last.’
- › **Provide good support systems throughout the process** so people know who to turn to for help.
- › **Rebuild student representation mechanisms** through the process.

“If we continue to try and go for the next efficiencies [at the margins] we’ll miss the opportunity to reset the goalposts and be back here again and again”

– **ITP governor**

# Feedback on the system

People told us there is much ITPs can do to improve how they work and the outcomes they produce for learners, industry and communities. They also told us there are aspects of the system that slow or disincentivise how much they can achieve, and that the current settings are contributing to their struggles to be sustainable. Themes largely centred on the funding models, operational settings and interagency collaboration.

Much of the feedback related to tertiary education policy. This mahi is done by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and is out of scope for ITP Roadmap 2020. However, we are working closely with MoE as they carry out a review of vocational education and training and we have passed this feedback on to them. Feedback that relates to other government agencies has also been passed on.

The funding model is too one-size-fits-all for both the ITP sector and learners

People told us that the current funding model needs to change because:

- › **It is too heavily volume-based and competitive.** We heard that there isn't a level playing field because each tertiary subsector has different drivers, commitments and overheads. The drive to make things work with the funding they receive doesn't always allow ITPs to offer what's needed, but incentivises them to retain what's profitable. This comes up against communities' expectations that they offer breadth of provision, from Youth Guarantee to SAC-funded (Student Achievement Component) degrees. We heard that, while universities can achieve economies of scale with lecture theatres of 200 SAC-funded students over three-year degrees, ITPs are taking on learners for six months or one year at a time to provide the programmes they need, and so need to find and retain more enrolments to be sustainable. People told us they feel this model disadvantages them.
- › **ITPs have particular roles that the model doesn't allow to be sustainable.** For example, staff and management told us that to meet the needs of the communities in their region, ITPs need to be able to run small, subscale courses and provision out in the regions and still remain sustainable. A different approach to this delivery would help ITPs extend their regional reach further. One staff member said, "Each regional and urban ITP has differing needs – some are the same. Funding should reflect those needs."
- › **It doesn't differentiate for learner or regional need.** One ITP staff member commented, "The funding rather than being volume-based should recognise challenges faced by regions and deprivation. A funding model based on a decile or risk system would be a great help." People also said that equity funding should be reviewed, with a view to increasing it and potentially targeting it more.
- › **It doesn't allow for agility and responsiveness.** We heard that there are 'too many buckets of money' and ITPs want to be able to shift money around to respond more to learner demand.
- › **Compliance costs are high.** Providers face different input, process and output monitoring and reporting requirements for different funds, each reflecting slightly different policy goals. This raises compliance costs for those delivering a breadth of provision.

"From an equity perspective, I wonder, are all EFTS equal?"

– ITP manager

We have excellent retention and success rates. The challenge is increasing pastoral care for students, and it needs to be recognised at government level so we can get it resourced.

– ITP staff manager

What would it look like if the Regional Economic Development funding and portfolio was a major contributor to the ITP funding system?

– ITP staff member

A number of other ideas were put forward about how funding approaches could be improved, including:

- › **Greater flexibility in different ways**, such as for work-integrated learning, to generate more revenue without constraint.
- › **Directing funding to different places or for different purposes.** For example, Māori and Pasifika Trades Training funding could be less tied to learning hours and face-to-face learning or could be able to cover costs such as data analytics, driver licensing and transport solutions. People acknowledged there needs to be consideration of the overlap between social need, infrastructure and education provision that ITPs are funded for.
- › **Funding for outcomes** – linking funding to sustainable employment, or non-work outcomes such as community engagement.
- › **New money that allows for innovation**, incentivising industry involvement in tertiary education, **and more money in existing funds** such as the Performance-Based Research Fund (to encourage industry-based research).
- › **Revisiting EFTS entitlements and student support** to encourage lifelong learning.

Operational settings aren't encouraging or enabling the right things

We heard that there are aspects of how policies have been implemented that mean ITPs aren't as effective or efficient as they could be, and aren't able to respond to regional needs fast enough. Feedback from governance, management and staff included:

- › **The focus on outputs is too narrow.** We heard that current performance indicators fail to take into account a broader range of good outcomes for learners, including 'distance travelled', as well as wider social and cultural impacts on the learner's life. We heard that ITPs are essentially 'punished' if a student leaves a course without completing, but does so to get a job or enrol with a different provider at a higher level. One person told us via email, "So many of our 'failures' we rename as successful non-completions."
- › **Slow, bureaucratic processes affect ITP responsiveness and agility.** We received a large amount of feedback on the time it takes to go through NZQA and TEC accreditation and approval processes. Even when ITPs want to provide solutions to industry, the end-to-end process (including time to put paperwork together at the ITP) can take a year or more. We heard that the system needs to enable much faster speed to market for qualifications and programmes.
- › **There are some operational issues**, such as:
  - Implementation of Fees Free (covered further below)
  - The impact of the Targeted Review of Qualifications (TRoQ). One management team told us the process has shifted a number of previously level 2 qualifications to level 3, and that this is too challenging for many of the learners they work with. Some staff said level 2 qualifications have lost components of basic trades skills.
  - Disincentives for secondary schools and ITPs to collaborate where it affects, or is perceived to affect, the funding of one or both.

"More support and funding and a stronger mandate from TEC to decolonise education and make sure each ITP is honouring their obligations to the Tiriti in a sustained way is vital."

– ITP staff member

- › **There is too much compliance.** We heard that reporting is too time consuming, fees setting is a lengthy process, forms and spreadsheets aren't always user-friendly, and audit, moderation and assessment processes could be simpler.

People also discussed other ideas with us, and provided advice for implementing upcoming work, such as:

- › **Thinking carefully about how micro-credentials will be funded.** One management team discussed with us how the economies of scale issue might play out at a micro-credential level. They said that just because these are small, bite-sized pieces of learning it doesn't necessarily mean the cost of investing in them will reduce proportionately – so we will have to consider how they can be sustainable for the sector to implement. They also suggested that micro-credentials might need to be more like 'nano-credentials' in future, ie, one- or two-credit courses.
- › **Reviewing industry qualifications** so they are appropriate and consistent.
- › **Allowing programmes to be taught in more languages** so ITPs can deliver more overseas.

Government agencies can improve how they work together and with the sector

Groups gave us feedback on this and put a number of questions to us. They said:

- › **TEC and NZQA can collaborate better** to streamline reporting, compliance and expectations. For example, we can clarify aspects of our expectations around standards of quality.
- › **TEC and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) can be more joined up** in how the student support and Fees Free systems operate. In particular, we heard that systems need to work when:
  - a person is studying and their benefit is cancelled – because sudden changes in financial situations can stop learners from turning up to class
  - a learner's fees-free eligibility comes up as 'unknown' because they may end up not having their fees paid by either Studylink or TEC. A staff member told us that from the learner perspective, it can be hard enough to complete their application process once (eg, for a student loan), and it should be government's responsibility to ensure they can begin their studies.
- › **TEC and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) can take a more joined-up approach** to forecasting industry demand with the sector and regional economic development agencies. A community member suggested, "The Government could say, 'we think this is coming down the track – what's your view?'"
- › **There should be an integrated career education system**, with defined roles and responsibilities for government and the sector. We may want professional bodies to do more coordinated career outreach.

"There needs to be a seamless solution for VET."

– ITP manager

People also told us TEC can improve how it works with the sector through:

“[We would like to] have only one set of KPIs to report on to government instead of different markers to go to NZQA, MoE, TEC, MBIE...”

– **ITP staff member**

- › **taking a longer-term, higher-trust funding approach**
- › **articulating some of its positions more clearly**, with one example being part-time delivery
- › **communicating rules, processes and funding decisions** in a clear, timely way with good understanding
- › **providing more advice and/or direction** in some areas, for example, some staff suggested we set more expectations around the quality of ITP governance.

Overall, people reiterated to us the importance of talking to those at the coalface about how policy works in practice. And, looking to the future, some people said they think Government needs a ‘long-term, bi-partisan vision for sector’ so positive change can be sustained.



**Part 3:**  
**What we heard from  
Māori and Pasifika**

## What we heard from Māori

We had kōrero (discussions) with Māori stakeholders across the country about what changes to ITPs could improve outcomes for learners and their whānau. We heard feedback:

- › **at our regional meetings** where we heard from Māori academic and general kaimahi (staff), ākonga (learners) and community stakeholders, including iwi and hapū representatives
- › **with Te Tira Manukura**, a national forum of Māori senior strategic kaimahi at ITPs, which hosted TEC at its AGM and provided feedback on how the ITP network needs to work with and support Māori
- › **at a TEC workshop** with a group of ākonga Māori, kaimahi, iwi representatives and government officials where different ITP network scenarios were considered
- › **at a number of ad hoc conversations** with Māori kaimahi and kaumātua (elders) at ITPs
- › **via our online surveys.**

We've also been working with Māori in our working groups and co-design process, and with our Māori staff at TEC. We are committed to working with Māori further as we continue with this mahi.

This section looks at what we heard during these discussions, under three main areas:

1. Success for ākonga Māori.
2. Relationships between Māori, government and ITPs.
3. Considerations for future ITP network models.

### Ākonga Māori succeeding as Māori

In all our kōrero across Aotearoa, the message was clear that, at the heart of it, tertiary education is about outcomes for learners and their whānau. For Māori, we heard that people shouldn't have to desert their Māoritanga to succeed. If anything, it should be the opposite – building cultural identity, supporting a whole-of-whānau approach to education across generations, and revitalising te reo Māori, tikanga (customs) and te ao Māori (the Māori world).

In the context of tertiary study and training – whether that's based primarily in the classroom or at work – ākonga want to be understood and respected (whakamana) as a whole person for their strengths, aspirations, challenges and the commitments in their lives.

#### Ngā kīnaki mō te aupiki – ingredients for success

Much of the kōrero was around taking a strengths-based approach to success. For example, we could improve recognition of prior learning practices so when someone comes to an ITP looking to pick up skills, they can build on what they already know. We heard that some bridging and preparatory courses can do people a disservice by being too long – they may only need a four-week course to be ready for study or training.

“How do we make service to Māori aspirations core to the purpose of ITPs?”

– **ITP manager**

ITPs should have positive environments that avoid repeating people's school experiences. A visible Māori workforce at ITPs, industry champions, and a well-developed whanaungatanga (kinship, connection) experience for online learning can help.

Two āhuetanga matua (key features) we need to get right for the ITP sector to work for Māori are:

- › **Increased flexibility for ākonga** so they can combine study with other commitments and learn locally. One aspect is where ITPs deliver, which should be at marae, secondary schools, community centres and temporary sites. Another is how ITPs deliver, which should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. We heard that online learning is enabling, but we'll need effective blended modes of delivery. A kaiako (teacher) doesn't have to be physically present, but the social aspect of learning can be motivational, provide good support structures and create shared commitment and accountability among people as they work towards common goals. This environment can be fostered in a room with other ākonga or, if done well, through working together online.
- › **Improved access to learning.** People face barriers to learning when they live remotely, move between homes often, and don't have reliable access to the internet or devices and the support to become digitally literate. Māori are over-represented in this group. We heard that rangatahi Māori (young Māori) are huge adopters of technology but can't, or don't want to, use their data for study. Older learners generally – not just Māori – may struggle to use new technologies. Māori who live away from their whānau and in the rohe of another iwi may feel more disconnected. A key consideration for ITPs is delivery sites. Regional delivery doesn't just mean main centres in each region, but also small towns and further afield. Pop-up sites can help with both remote access and supporting transient cohorts of people.

### The importance of outcomes and lifelong career pathways

In general, we heard that pūkenga (skills) and outcomes for ākonga Māori need to be understood more widely. One example was growing people's pūkenga to be marae ready as well as work ready. Tertiary education should enable people to have discussions on their marae, kōrero with their kaumātua and contribute to their communities.

We also discussed employment and the future of mahi. We heard that people often don't believe the kōrero 'your job is at risk of disruption', especially coming from an ITP that could be trying to sell them a course of study. We heard that ITPs and government can encourage Māori to study and train at higher levels, and support multiple entry points so people continue to adapt in their work and increasingly earn while they learn.

People also told us mobility is important – we need a national talent pool for employment so Māori can train their people for jobs across the country, and people can move to where opportunities arise.

## Relationships between Māori, government and ITPs that lead to success

A big kaupapa (theme) of the kōrero were reflections on the relationships between Māori, government and ITPs, and the roles each needs to commit to and fulfil for the tertiary system to support Māori. To work within the foundation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, we need relationships that endure, and shared recognition that partnerships take time and effort to work well and create value. On this point, one of the messages from Māori we spoke with was ‘let us lead’.

In order for partnerships to be effective, another overarching theme discussed was accountability – to whom and for what. If accountability settings are wrong, leadership and communication tend to slip when mahi gets hard. The future network model might need to create accountability for results beyond the short term.

Roles and responsibilities are important for government and ITPs

Government should:

- › **Assume Māori need to be involved in decision making at every level of the system** – ‘nothing about us, without us’. This involvement needs to be planned for and purposeful. This includes a greater role in policy implementation, ie, how policies are applied on the ground.
- › **Implement better data-sharing arrangements** to enable tracking of ākonga from primary to secondary and into tertiary, and between institutions, taking the knowledge about their background and experiences with them.
- › **Support better information sharing and dissemination** so whānau are informed about pathways to careers, and the labour market’s need are better linked to the tertiary system.
- › **Use predictive analytics across the ITP network.** There was strong support for TEC leading work on ITPs’ use of predictive analytics to increase learner success.
- › **Enable greater flexibility around outcomes, processes and compliance** such as around the educational performance indicators (EPIs) and NZQA approvals.

ITPs should:

- › **See committing and delivering to iwi and hapū aspirations as a core part of their role**, including employment outcomes as well as social equity and prosperity.
- › **Ensure Māori have a voice at all levels**, from grass roots to governance. However, it was acknowledged that iwi members on councils have mixed allegiances because ITP council members have obligations to act in the interests of the institution, which won’t always be the same as the interests of their iwi. Where iwi members sit on ITP councils, people need to understand and agree they are not expected to represent their iwi in that position, and that their presence doesn’t negate the need for the council to consult with iwi.
- › **Have culturally capable and Treaty-aware leaders.** Leaders should recognise the mātauranga and kaupapa Māori expertise of kaimahi, support a well-resourced network of kaimahi Māori, and back all staff to be culturally competent – the cultural mahi shouldn’t just come down to Māori in addition to their own roles.
- › **Use predictive analytics** to systematically identify trends in student behaviours and factors affecting success, and act on them.

- › **Acknowledge (as should government) the pressures on iwi.** Iwi increasingly have many different demands and can be supported through partnerships.

The roles iwi and hapū are best-placed to play, or could usefully play, are:

- › **Caring for tamariki and rangatahi** ‘mai i te kōhanga tae noa ki te mahi’ (from early childhood through education and into work). They can also engage with whānau to support tamariki in their education so teachers are able to focus on teaching.
- › **Providing a system view** to create greater responsiveness to Māori. For example, iwi and hapū could look across all the tertiary providers in a particular region and how they operate as a system for their tāngata (people). This requires access to system-level data.
- › **Planning for the future** so rangatahi in the iwi can design what leadership looks like to them and create intergenerational success. The combination of a system view and future planning could help Māori lead robust kōrero around who does what for their ākonga.

## Considerations for future ITP network models

At the workshop with ākonga Māori, kaimahi, iwi representatives and government officials, we explored potential models for the future ITP network. Some take matua (main points) from our kōrero were:

- › **From a system perspective, funding models, policy, regulation and pedagogy will drive success.** If these aspects and the incentives on ITPs are right, many models can work.
- › **From a learner and whānau perspective, the change process needs to be managed well** – otherwise people will leave the system or not enter it. This is an opportunity to boost the reputation of ITPs compared to universities, which might help more rangatahi make the best choice for themselves.
- › **At regional and subregional levels there are big choices to make about flows of funding and decision making.** The regions need to have power and mana motuhake (independence) from any central body. With a more centralised model, hapū representatives across the regions could recruit and support ākonga and provide career information and advice.
- › **With change comes different relationships and responsibilities** that need to be considered. If the model includes a central hub, for example, the iwi and hapū in that rohe may have more influence but will also take on additional responsibilities. If the model includes mergers it can affect the kaumātua of the entities coming together, for example their mahi or their sense of mana.
- › **From a governance perspective, we should look to models such as Te Mātāwai,** the independent statutory entity charged with revitalising te reo Māori.

# What we heard from Pasifika

We discussed the ITP Roadmap 2020 project with Pasifika through a number of forums:

- › **At our regional meetings** across the country we heard from Pasifika academic and general staff, students, and community stakeholders.
- › **TEC held two fono.** The first was with representatives from business, communities, the education sector, central and local government and a group of secondary school students. The second was with senior Pasifika staff working in the ITPs.
- › **We got feedback** from Year 13 students and university students involved in [MATES \(Mentoring and Tutoring Education Scheme\)](#).
- › **We had a number of talanoa (discussions)** with Pasifika staff at ITPs.
- › **Our online surveys** gave people an opportunity to comment from different perspectives – whether they were staff members, students, employers or members of the community.

“Education is the only pathway to a successful future.”

– Pasifika stakeholder

We’ve also been working with Pasifika in our working groups and co-design process, and with our Pasifika staff at TEC. We are committed to working with Pasifika further as we continue with this project.

This section looks at what we heard during these discussions, under three main areas:

1. Success for Pasifika learners.
2. Career education and community engagement.
3. How the ITP sector can respond more effectively.

## Understanding Pasifika learners and supporting them to succeed

We heard that, to help Pasifika learners succeed, people need to recognise and understand the diverse identities within the Pasifika community in New Zealand. This is about moving away from some behaviours, such as deficit thinking and discourse about Pasifika, and towards others, such as tapping into and leveraging off the strengths of Pasifika culture in teaching, learning and work experience. We discussed the need to better recognise the separate identities of Māori and Pasifika, the duality of Pasifika living in New Zealand and the changing profiles and increasing sophistication of young Pasifika.

We discussed some key ways to help Pasifika learners succeed at ITPs, including:

- › **Embedding culturally relevant practice**, both through Pasifika values and concepts in course content, and support services responsive to Pasifika learners, with funding connected to outcomes.
- › **Diversifying how people learn** – first by recognising prior learning, work and voluntary experience, and then providing tailored learning that includes project-based work, short upskilling programmes and micro-credentials.

- › **Bringing out the Pasifika student voice** through representation across levels at ITPs and within students' associations.
- › **Improving transitions into tertiary study and training** from multiple entry points, particularly secondary schools, and ensuring ITP pathways have a line of sight to outcomes for the learner.
- › **Working alongside local communities** to support learners through their journey.

## **Career education and community engagement is shifting, but needs to go further**

A big theme in these discussions was around the perception of an ITP education, and how to create more positive awareness among Pasifika communities that translates into more people studying, and at higher levels. We heard that some community engagement is working well and communities' knowledge of ITPs is increasing. However, the career literacy of influencers is still limited by a combination of issues, including around information, perception and understanding.

Students told us that, from their parents' perspectives, education is critical to a successful future and university is likely the best option to secure it. They may not know what a VET education means or how the post-study outcomes compare to other pathways. As a result, people who want to pursue an academic career don't necessarily explore all their options, and those with family responsibilities may find a job without being aware of options to earn while they learn.

We heard that there are a number of ways career education and outreach can be improved. One is linking successful ITP graduates with potential learners and their influencers to share their experiences, provide information on job prospects and even mentor people. Active community outreach – for example in workplaces and churches – can work better than information evenings, as can advertising through more traditional forms of media such as TV and radio, in different languages.

Career advice and information should continue throughout people's careers, which ITPs can support by providing meaningful connections to employers and information about the changing labour market.

## **The ITP sector can respond in key ways to be more effective for Pasifika**

Hand in hand with the talanoa on career education was the view that ITPs need to provide clarity of their purpose and offerings to boost their profile and reputation among schools, communities and the workforce. The inefficiencies caused by confusion around what ITPs do, and duplication with other parts of the sector, means Pasifika are missing out on choosing them as a first option.

We heard that ITPs need to know the communities they are supporting, strengthen their relevance, be clear on their offering and perhaps even go back to their origins in community-focused education.

We heard that ITPs are successful when:

- › **Pasifika learners feel that they belong and their success is important.**
- › **There are dedicated Pasifika staff throughout the institution.** This includes Pasifika in senior leadership roles, Pasifika academics in programmes with high Pasifika student numbers and Pasifika advisors and mentors for learners. They should be involved in decision making at all levels.
- › **All staff are incentivised for Pasifika success and accountable for underperformance.** There should be targets for Pasifika student outcomes that are linked to accountability mechanisms, Pasifika strategies at all ITPs and training in multicultural intelligence (CQ). Staff should set high expectations of Pasifika learners and support them to achieve.
- › **Specific support services are strong,** for example pastoral care, financial, academic, workforce development and Pasifika initiatives and events.
- › **Programmes have both a cultural and economic focus.** ITPs should be able to respond to immediate labour market and community needs.
- › **They work well with secondary schools.** We discussed ITPs infiltrating the secondary school curriculum to provide credit achievement and vocational pathways from secondary school.

Different funding mechanisms could enable these successes

People raised ideas around an equity-focused funding model that has better alignment to the needs of the learner. Considerations on the units of funding included demographic factors, ethnicity and support services.



Part 4:  
What we heard  
from regions

**In each region across Aotearoa, people told us what it's like to live, work and learn there, and how they think things will change in future.** As the first management team we met with put it, "Every region will tell you this, but: Our region is unique." This section details the key things people told us about their regions.

## NORTHLAND



- Small population over a big area.
- Importance of Treaty-based partnerships with hapū.
- High proportion of ākonga Māori, student body becoming younger.
- Challenges: Transport infrastructure, driver licensing, poverty.

## AUCKLAND



- 'Local within the city' – place matters. Where you live influences where you eat, work and socialise.
- Communities: Multicultural. Working and studying at same time for many.
- Growth: Business, capital projects, residential and schools.
- Challenges: Living costs, population pressures, infrastructure.

## SOUTH AUCKLAND



- "South Auckland has a lot to give and people here are waiting for the opportunities – we need to invest in them, but businesses shouldn't see them as cheap labour."
- Diverse communities, particularly Pasifika.
- Community expectation that the local ITP will be more than an education facility – chaplaincy, arts and crafts, singing groups, etc.
- Challenges: Lots of first-in-family, effects of gentrification on larger families.

## WAIKATO



- Golden triangle of Auckland/Hamilton/Tauranga that holds lots of potential.
- Hamilton is in a good spot – reach to port, suburbs, ability to expand, capturing Auckland residents who commute.
- Two million people within a two-hour drive – good infrastructure will be key.
- "At the end of the day, someone in Wellington needs to decide whether, and how, Hamilton can kick into the next level."

## BAY OF PLENTY



- Big primary industries and tourism area – ‘a microcosm of New Zealand industry’.
- Large rohe with lots of small communities that are very different to each other.
- High Māori population, lots of iwi, high expectations for people development.
- Challenges: Poverty, infrastructure, access, NEET levels.

## EAST COAST



- Large proportion of Māori, reflected in EIT learners, eg, 75 percent at Tairāwhiti campus.
- Large geographic spread (Ruatōria to Waipukurau), small towns and communities.
- Growing Māori economy and opportunity for good development strategies to support regional population growth.
- Challenges: Poverty, regional isolation, infrastructure, eg, education facilities, seasonal industries.

## TARANAKI



- Create a ‘rising tide that brings up all boats’.
- The local ITP should focus on regional identity – people, culture, geography, heritage
- Large conservation estate – 84 percent of the land.
- Challenges: Transport (lowest private ownership of vehicles in New Zealand), transitioning to a low-carbon, ‘people’ economy, second-chance learners, regional isolation.

## MANAWATŪ- WHANGANUI



- Wairarapa described as ‘a great place to live’ with continuing increases in school numbers.
- Vibrant small towns – not everyone wants or can afford to live in big cities.
- Areas of industry growth, eg, horticulture.
- Challenges: Transport solutions.

## WELLINGTON



- Industries – tech and creative, professional services, government, high-value manufacturing.
- Strong, vibrant communities with constructive and highly valued partnerships with iwi, eg, Ngāti Toa in Porirua.
- Different needs of communities in the region require local solutions.
- Challenges: Housing, infrastructure.

## NELSON-MARLBOROUGH



- Disproportionally older workforce that needs to be retained and retrained.
- Need good local governance, working together helping drive the local region, with the local ITP contributing widely.
- Iwi economy is about to take off – needs to be supported.
- Challenges: Skills for industry such as fisheries.

## WEST COAST



- Regionally dispersed area with key industries – fishing, conservation, tourism, panel beating.
- Passionate, loyal locals.
- Opportunity for highly integrated vocational secondary/tertiary education.
- Challenges: Transport, second-chance learners, weather, seasonal work, isolated population.

## CANTERBURY



- Well-developed networks, eg, between tertiary education providers, regional economic development agencies and Ngāi Tahu.
- Both an opportunity and a challenge is joining up the education system – secondary, tertiary and cross-tertiary collaboration.
- Challenges: Keeping learners, meeting the skills needs, infrastructure and access across the region.

## OTAGO



- Industries – service sector, agriculture, tourism, conservation.
- Key players contributing in the region, eg, Otago DHB and tertiary education providers.
- Growth and development bringing investment, population and business, etc.
- Dunedin is a student city – but hard to retain young professionals and families.

## SOUTHLAND



- Low unemployment with people looking to train quickly rather than complete full qualifications.
- ‘Poised for economic development’ with more people coming to the region.
- International students have brought diversity to the community – businesses, people and skills.
- Challenges: Southland is seen as cold and boring – challenge is to lift visibility beyond the region.



# Glossary



The following Māori and Samoan terms are used throughout the document.

'āiga.....	family
ako.....	learning
ākonga.....	learner
āhuatanga matua.....	key features
fono.....	meeting, assembly
hapū.....	subtribe, extended kinship group
hui.....	meeting, gathering, conference
iwi.....	tribe, extended kinship group, people
kaiako.....	teacher
kaimahi.....	staff
kaumātua.....	elder
kaupapa.....	theme, issue, topic
kōrero.....	discussion, talk, story
kupu āwhina.....	advice
mahi.....	work
mana.....	prestige, authority, influence, spiritual power
mana motuhake.....	independence
Māoritanga.....	Māori culture, practices and beliefs
mātauranga Māori.....	Māori knowledge
mokopuna.....	grandchild, grandchildren
pūkenga.....	skills
rangatahi.....	youth
rohe.....	region
take matua.....	main points
takiwā.....	region
talanoa.....	conversation, talk
tamariki.....	children
tāngata.....	people

te ao Māori.....	the Māori word
Te Tiriti o Waitangi.....	the Treaty of Waitangi
tikanga.....	custom, protocol
whakaaro.....	idea, opinion
whakamana.....	respected
whakataukī.....	proverb
whanaungatanga.....	relationship, kinship, connection

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Authors  
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