

Reform of Vocational Education

What the Government's Proposals would mean for the regions of New Zealand

Thank you for taking an interest in the Reform of Vocational Education. We want to hear your views on these proposals. The changes we propose are complex, and we need the detailed knowledge and the different perspectives of people across New Zealand to get them right.

This fact sheet is a companion document to the Reform of Vocational Education consultation discussion document, which is published here: <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/reform-of-vocational-education/>. It provides additional information on what the proposed reforms would mean for the regions of New Zealand.

What should local bodies, chambers of commerce, and other regional bodies of New Zealand understand about the proposals?

Current problems in the regions

A strong, healthy vocational education system is critical to supporting the Government's regional economic development agenda, and our comprehensive work to raise New Zealand's living standards. Supporting thriving, sustainable regions is one of the Government's key strategies for achieving *'Government Priority 1 – an economy that is growing and working for all of us'*. The system must respond better to skills and education needs at a regional level.

The current institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITP) network plays an important role in ensuring that access to vocational education is available throughout the regions of New Zealand. Without educational reform to help stabilise the sector, the range of vocational education options in some regions of New Zealand will likely decline. Educational relevance to regions could be at risk and some existing ITP campuses may no longer be sustainable.

New Zealand needs a robust regional network of vocational education provision, which serves both national and regional interests in balance with each other. The proposals will help to strengthen vocational education throughout the regions of New Zealand in terms of meeting the needs of local communities, iwi, employers, and industry. We want regional agencies to work alongside central Government to collaborate in building regional economies.

A vision for NZ

A strong, unified vocational education system that is sustainable and fit for the future of work, delivering what learners, employers and communities need to be successful.

Have your say

The government is seeking feedback on the proposals for the Reform of Vocational Education by Wednesday 27 March 2019. The link above will also take you to our online survey where you can respond to the questions posed and more.

You can also provide feedback by attending a face-to-face consultation event. Details on these events are available at <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/reform-of-vocational-education/>

Our proposals aim to increase the availability and relevancy of vocational education in our regions. We need to make sure that we create a system that has the capacity and capability to deliver the skills that our regions are urgently seeking, and we need to do this quickly.

What are the specifics of the proposals for regions?

A single New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology with a robust regional network of provision

The Government proposes to create a New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology with a robust regional network of provision to offer high-quality vocational education throughout New Zealand, building on and expanding the regional presence of the current ITP network.

The New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology would bring together all 16 existing ITPs in New Zealand. The creation of a new institution that encompasses the delivery previously offered through our current 16 ITPs will allow greater and faster improvements, compared to continuing with ad-hoc mergers of competing ITPs across New Zealand, as individual institutions run into financial difficulties.

A consolidated organisation could make strategic use of capital, achieve greater efficiency in programme design, development and delivery, and reduce the duplication of back-office functions within the current vocational education network.

A dedicated charter in the legislation would set out the purpose and functions of the institution, including specific obligations for the Institute to ensure it was responding to the needs and aspirations of regional New Zealand.

Regional and local campuses of the New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology would be focused on delivering high-quality and relevant services to learners, employers and communities across all of New Zealand, rather than competing with each other for enrolments. These campuses would spend more time on the delivery of quality teaching and learning, with delivery and responsiveness led through engagement with regional and local stakeholders. Regional campuses of the Institute could:

- » connect strongly with local regional and economic development strategies;
- » have strong relationships with local Government; and
- » work closely with other local education providers, particularly secondary schools.

This would ensure that delivery is tailored to regional need – including those needs identified through regional and local bodies and Government.

The Government could show its commitment to regions by locating national office functions in one or more regions.

The creation of a New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology would help increase the accessibility and relevance of vocational education across New Zealand. A new model of delivery through a New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology, with regional campuses, could allow small but relevant niche courses to be run regionally, giving learners and employers access to greater education and training options without the need for travel.

The Government would like the New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology to be in operation from 1 January 2020. The process of transformation would be phased to ensure minimal disruption to learners.

Key changes

- » The Government is proposing a new model of delivery through a New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology with regional campuses.
- » A local Regional Leadership Group would be put in place for community leaders to provide advice on what is needed in the region
- » There is an opportunity for niche courses to be run regionally through visiting tutors or blended delivery.
- » The risk of a region losing an ITP is reduced, as the New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology would stabilise the sector.
- » Regional partnerships would continue to support the Institute of Skills and Technology.

Regional Leadership Groups

Each region would have a Regional Leadership Group – aligned to other regional advisory organisations being developed through various Government agencies - to advise the Institute’s “national office” and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) on local skills, to link with local and regional development strategies, and to advise on what mix of courses should be offered in that region. This would include both existing course offerings that are important to maintain, and new areas of provision where local needs aren’t currently being fully met.

Part of the role of the Regional Leadership Group could be identifying how the regional campus can work to identify future labour demand needs for the region, and how these could be addressed through upskilling both our domestic and international student market. The courses on offer in each region would not be limited by what the local or regional campuses could provide on their own – each campus will be able to draw on the resources of the whole New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology system to offer what the region needs. In this way, regional delivery and responsiveness would not just be maintained, but enhanced and expanded.

We are interested in feedback about what Regional Leadership Group structure might best serve multiple needs across immigration, education and labour markets. They would have a critical role to play in bringing together employers, education providers and other stakeholders such as community leaders, iwi and local government, to ensure these regional voices are heard in decision-making that affects them.

Groups of this kind have been mooted in recent consultation on proposed changes to immigration settings (see <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/have-your-say/consultation-on-a-new-approach-to-employer-assisted-work-visas-and-regional-workforce-planning>) as well as in education contexts, such as the Tomorrow’s Schools proposals (see <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/tomorrows-schools-review/>). The introduction of Regional Leadership Groups would provide another opportunity for regions to ensure that they are best served through our vocational education system.

Both the “New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology” “and Regional Leadership Group” are working names, and we are interested in your feedback on these terms.

Redefined roles for industry bodies and education providers

In addition, there are wider vocational education changes that are being explored through our consultation process. One of these proposed changes is around the roles of different types of providers within the vocational education system, and the establishment of Industry Skills Bodies (ISBs). These would take on an industry training role from current Industry Training Organisations (ITOs).

What are the potential impacts on the regions of New Zealand?

Our regions keep New Zealand moving. The proposals outlined in this document would increase the amount and range of delivery available to regional New Zealand through our proposed vocational education network.

The new Institute would build on the current relationships, skills and unique identities of our current national network of ITPs. The vocational education system would enable more and better regional delivery in a sustainable way across all of New Zealand.

Regional stakeholders would be able to access a sustainable, stable and supportive network of regional campuses as part of a New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology. These campuses would offer a wider range of delivery, with offerings tailored to the needs of local communities, employers and industry, through the Institute’s engagement with Regional Leadership Groups and other relevant bodies.

Implications for 2019

The proposals in this document may go ahead in this or another form, but the Government won’t make any decisions until we have heard and carefully considered feedback from this consultation process. Even if the proposals for change go ahead, we do not expect learners to experience any substantial change in their education and learning

during 2019; and any changes from 2020 onward would be implemented in a way that minimised disruption to learners and employers.

If you work or partner with a regional ITP, for example as a school, employer, iwi, non-government organisation (NGO) or local Government official, you should continue to do so. The proposed reforms aim to maintain and expand, rather than reduce or withdraw from, education and training activity in the regions. You can continue to build and maintain enduring and highly valuable relationships with ITPs.

These proposals support the Government's International Education Strategy objectives to enable greater regional provision of international education and share the benefits of the international education industry with our regions.

What happens after I provide feedback?

We expect that many people will be interested in having a say on the future of vocational education in New Zealand. Everyone's feedback is welcome. We'll carefully consider what we've heard in engagement meetings, along with the feedback that is sent in to the survey, email address and phone line. The Minister and Cabinet will receive a summary of all the feedback, which will inform their decisions about the Reform of Vocational Education. You can expect to hear about these decisions around mid-2019. We'll also continue to draw on feedback and ask for more conversations as we work through how to implement the Government's decisions.

Are you looking for more detail?

Technical discussion documents that go into greater detail on the specifics of the proposals are available at <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/reform-of-vocational-education/>. Questions on the details are available on the technical discussion documents and online when you indicate that you wish to provide specific feedback to the following topics:

- » Proposal on roles of providers and industry bodies
- » Proposal on a single New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology
- » Proposal on a unified funding system