

Workforce Development Council public meeting

Auckland
25 September 2019
~ 50 attendees





Overview

On 25 September 2019, the Tertiary Education Commission and Ministry of Education held the third of a series of public meetings on Workforce Development Councils (WDCs). These meetings form part of a wider engagement process for the Reform of Vocational Education work programme, focused on the potential coverage and governance of WDCs.



This meeting was well attended, with a range of representatives from employers (including small businesses), industry associations, iwi organisations, industry training organisations, education providers and central and local Government present.

The following pages are a brief summary of some key themes identified at the meeting.

Please note that this output document does not claim to represent the individual views of all attendees present at the meeting on 25 September 2019. Rather, it provides a general overview of some key matters discussed.

Coverage



Potential Groupings

Generally, most of the participants at this workshop were supportive of an approach that meant a higher number of WDCs – generally, this meant six or seven.

However, there was also some discussion about how four WDCs could work, and how for some industries that were cross-cutting across various related sectors (such as construction, engineering and manufacturing), this could mean less relationships to manage.

There was robust discussion about why recreation would be included alongside cultural and creative industries, and a number of tables agreed this could potentially sit with a different WDC (maybe a 'service industries' WDC).

Participants also discussed the merits of grouping health, social and community services together in the new WDC world.



Shared Functions?

There was strong support for some shared functions, although several tables noted that this could be better referred to as shared competencies.

The group acknowledged that well-executed shared services or competencies could be of great benefit to learners, given the likely consistency that would result.

There was discussion of a possible shared function that offered a single contact point for employers to the WDC system.

Participants also noted WDCs would need to develop a different capability to workforce planning, and there could be value in having a shared function in this area.



What's really important?

There was a clear need to ensure that, whatever groupings are agreed, these are tied into the secondary schooling system.

Several participants noted it was interesting that we were workshoping options presented by the ITO sector (alongside other options) as they felt that the process of determining an appropriate number of WDCs was not necessarily linked to the current ITO sector.

The question of how the regulatory bodies for various industries would interact with WDCs was raised, noting that this is a significant issue for some industries.





Governance

How can the interests of employers and industry be represented?

As with our previous workshops, it was clear that industries were mainly interested in how they could ensure their voice is heard in the new WDC system. The group discussed mechanisms to enable this, and acknowledged that there may be industries that would not feel comfortable with an industry association speaking on their behalf. It was, therefore, crucial that employers are enabled to be able to feedback into the WDCs at several levels.

Attracting governance experts was seen as key to ensuring success for the WDCs, including adequate compensation. People noted the merit of some independent appointees. There was also discussion of identifying champions for industry, who don't necessarily represent specific industries, but the nature of doing business in New Zealand.

Participants also raised the need for learner feedback loops to be embedded into the WDCs.

What governance structures could work well?

Participants also discussed not only the type of governance structure that could work well, but also how exactly Government could measure the effectiveness of WDCs as a whole. The methods or means by which Government could measure WDC performance would need to be considered in the development of any governance structure, as the function required would help to determine the form of governance needed.

There was a range of discussions around whether a skills based or representative governance model could work best, or a mixture of these two. Several tables also made it very clear that the purpose and deliverables of the WDC would again drive its governance framework, and that there could be a statutory requirement on WDCs in terms of their need to meet industry requirements.

The potential of Board elected stakeholder advisory groups was also discussed as a possible mechanism for enabling voice, alongside working groups on sector-specific issues.



Thank you very much for your time

If you have any questions about this document,
or the WDC work programme, please feel free to
contact us at WDCs@tec.govt.nz.

