

Workforce Development Council public meeting

Christchurch
19 September 2019
~ 50 attendees



Tertiary Education
Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua





Overview

On 19 September 2019, the Tertiary Education Commission and Ministry of Education held the second 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, and focused around the potential coverage and governance of WDCs.

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

The following pages present a brief summary of some of the 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 19 September 2019. Rather, it provides a general overview of some key matters discussed.



Coverage



Potential Groupings

Participants talked about whether large groupings (such as four WDCs) would be too big, and whether voices of specific industries might be lost in a model with lots of potentially unrelated industries grouped in together.

There was general support for an ICT and professional services grouping. Some participants wondered if a Vocational Pathway based grouping with the addition of ICT and professional services would work best.

Whatever the groupings, participants made it clear that they needed to align with the schools environment, to make sure there is a connection with agreed career pathways (even if a Vocational Pathway model was not used).



Shared Functions?

There were lots of different thoughts presented on shared functions. Some people thought this was a good idea and would remove duplication, but that there needed to be consideration of the particular needs of niche industry groupings in the context of shared services. They felt that reducing duplication was one of the key aims of the reforms, as well as consistency. There was some support for shared frameworks for working.

Participants were clear that they needed to be able to speak to people that knew their industry inside out, particularly around qualification development. This meant the groupings had to be 'logical'.

Others felt that shared services would not be of value, or there was a potential for a Centre of Vocational Excellence in some areas such as 'core skills' for learners.



What's really important?

Employers had to be active in both the development of WDCs, and their ongoing work. This would ensure that resources developed were relevant, and what employers actually need.

There needed to be mechanisms for involvement in the WDC, and a way to measure the WDCs effectiveness in responding to industry needs. The incentives on WDCs needed to be quite different than those on current ITOs.

Participants were also interested in how WDCs would be resourced and funded, what their connections would be to Centres of Vocational Excellence and Regional Skills Leadership Groups, and how they can be more future focused than (some) current ITOs.





Governance

How can the interests of employers and industry be represented?

The importance of industry experts and retaining something similar to current ITO Industry Partner Groups was raised, with a desire to retain a similar sort of feedback loop in the future.

A number of participants stated that relevant industry associations should be included in the leadership of WDCs, as they represent the voice of industry.

It was also important that learners and trainees had a voice in the new system. Diverse representation was agreed to be key, and ensuring that a range of interests are accounted for.

Some attendees stated that WDCs needed to be structured in a way that doesn't incentivise them to respond only to the largest industries – but need to consider the needs of smaller, but critically important, industries.

What governance structures may work well?

Participants noted the need for skills based governance structure, which would mean that clear criteria for appropriate people (and specific role dynamics) would need to be established early.

The establishment of standards/processes and protocols for activity and engagement was really important, to make sure the WDC gets developed 'in the right direction' and has strong leadership.

Several participants noted that it would be really key, particularly with larger groupings, to have representatives that were able to represent industries beyond their own direct industry or sphere of influence.

They also discussed that it might be good to be able to 'co-opt' people from the current ITO sector, as they have lots of important knowledge that we don't want to lose.



*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.

