

Workforce Development Council public meeting

Hamilton
17 September 2019
~ 60 attendees





Overview

On 17 September 2019, the Tertiary Education Commission and Ministry of Education held the first 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), iwi, 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 17 September 2019. Rather, it provides a general overview of some key matters discussed.

Coverage



Potential Groupings

There was lots of discussion over the best way to group WDCs, and the room was split – some people recognised the value of a separate Professional Services and ICT grouping, noting that this grouping has the potential for future growth.

Others questioned if there was enough ‘critical mass’ in some of the groupings to have significant size and scale.

Others felt the Vocational Pathways groupings made sense, or a smaller grouping of four WDCs – which would allow for greater scale and potential flexibility in a changing future.



Shared Functions?

The idea of having some shared functions was widely debated. Most tables agreed there was some value in having shared functions, particularly around pastoral care practice, literacy and numeracy and cultural competencies. Some, but not all, tables also thought this could potentially extend to back office functions.

One table noted that there wasn’t a need for a **separate** shared services function, but that a framework for a consistent approach to functions could be beneficial.

Tables also discussed whether it could be possible to opt in or out of a shared services arrangement.



What’s really important?

Regardless of the groupings, all tables agreed that it was really important that smaller industries are ensured a voice, regardless of which grouping they fall under.

Some tables discussed the importance of open and collaborative information sharing and development. This would help to ensure that direction wouldn’t just come from the top – and the WDCs would truly represent the needs of industry.

Consistency of standards – both quality and educational – was very important to participants.

Ongoing communications and feedback loops needed to be embedded into the very fabric of the WDCs.



Governance

How can the interests of employers and industry be represented?

Tables talked about the importance of having reflective, representative governance structures in place. When participants talked about representation, this wasn't just employer representation, but making sure there was consideration for iwi/Māori, trainees, employees and regional representatives.

One table noted that they felt governance was not the most appropriate mechanism to ensure employer voice was represented, and that there are other mechanisms by which this feedback could be gathered.

Attendees also noted that it was very important that the interests of learners and trainees were represented in the new system.

What governance structures may work well?

There was a strong desire to build a largely flat governance structure, to avoid multiple layers of bureaucracy. However, lots of people noted this can be difficult if you want to ensure that you get a mix of skills-based and representative appointees – as this could result in a very large group.

Diversity was very important, and the structure needed to reflect the diverse nature of both people and culture, as well as employers and industry types – particularly if WDCs have large groupings.

Some tables talked about the current relationships they have with their ITO, and what worked well. There were informal and formal feedback loops discussed that allowed businesses – even small businesses – to stay connected to their ITO, and to ensure training was relevant.



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.

