

Workforce Development Council public meeting

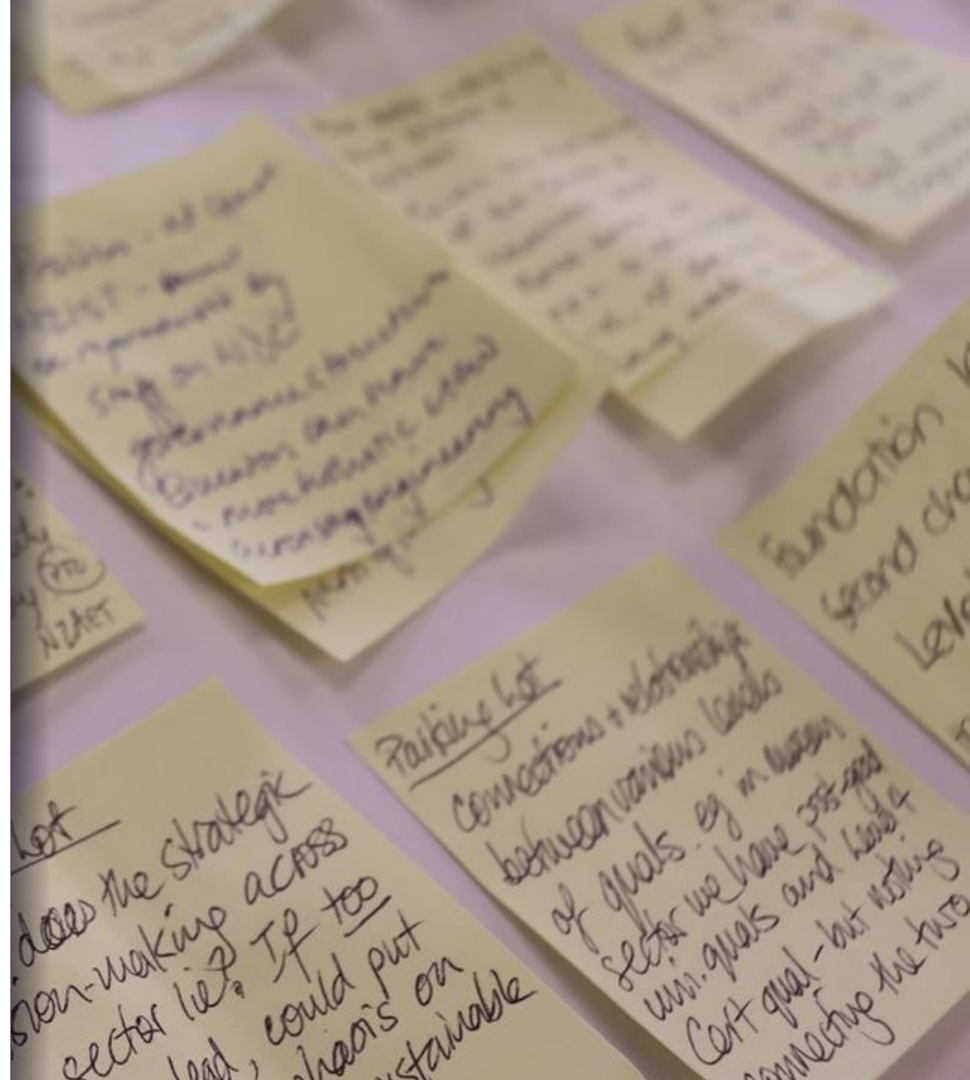
Wellington
20 September 2019
~ 100 attendees



Tertiary Education
Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA





Overview

On 20 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, 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 20 September 2019. Rather, it provides a general overview of some key matters discussed.

Coverage



Potential Groupings

There was a relatively strong split across the room in terms of support for grouping areas. Some participants felt that, with more WDCs, there was greater potential to be heard, and that having less WDCs risks them being too 'general'. Vertical integration was mainly viewed as being complicated, though it could be beneficial to learners.

It was clear that a lot of attendees were less concerned about the number of groupings, but were more interested in the potential functions of WDCs.

There was some support for the addition of a Professional/ICT grouping, which could also include admin and support services.

Whatever groupings are used, participants made it clear the groups need to be comprehensive to avoid creating gaps, and to prevent overlapping between groupings.



Shared Functions?

Several attendees noted there was real value in reducing duplication by creating some shared functions, or developing frameworks for consistency across the WDCs.

There was discussion around the different areas these could include, including literacy and numeracy, cultural capabilities, qualification design and 'core skills'.

There were some concerns that overarching shared services could be troubling from a governance or management level, as it might be unclear 'who runs who' – with organisations not taking responsibility for certain parts of the system.



What's really important?

At this meeting, we spent lots of time on questions and answers around the general WDC work programme, as well as questions around the Reform of Vocational Education, and wider challenges in employment and skills.

A number of attendees were concerned about ongoing training for their trainees, and ensuring they would be supported in a new system – including whether work-based training would continue.

There was a strong desire for more information about the ongoing process, to assure employers and industry representatives – as well as trainees – that training will continue.

Governance

How can the interests of employers and industry be represented?

Participants agreed there was a need to identify the specific skills profile for effective WDC leadership, particularly when representing broad industry groupings.

Some participants felt it was crucial that existing ITO knowledge and resources weren't lost in a transition, and recommended a two to three year transition board. Others made it clear that a 'clean slate' approach was preferred.

A number of participants suggested that stakeholder forums (or similar mechanisms) could ensure fair representation from different industry areas, and these could be voted for by relevant employers.

There was a desire to see technical/niche advisory groups set up, to deal with very specific functions and skills, as participants felt that these were a key part of the current ITO system. This could assure small industries, for example, that they would still be able to have a hands-on approach as subject matter experts for their specific area. Others felt that while existing feedback loops were adequate, there were lots of opportunity to build on this.

Participants also noted that open and clear communications between government and industry/employers needed to be a key component of any new system.

Governance

What governance structures may work well?

Some attendees were clear they wanted the new WDCs to be entirely new organisations, not just a 'roll over' of the ITO system. They felt the latter wouldn't have the right skills base for a different type of organisation.

There was an agreed need for clear guidance and structure around governance, to make sure this was fit for purpose (and to potentially avoid the creation of a number of different, confusing governance models).

Several participants commented on a need for both independent experts and industry representatives, and these could be elected by specific stakeholder groupings (such as employers) or industry associations, based on nominations.

There was a strong desire to build in WDC mechanisms that weren't necessarily a part of governance structures, but would enable employers to signal their satisfaction with WDCs. These could include surveys, referendums and reference groups.

Several people commented that governance structures needed to be designed to actually focus on employers and trainees, as end users, rather than providing bloated layers of management that reduce organisational effectiveness.



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.

Coverage

There are a few different ways we could organise coverage for Workforce Development Councils



Based on current Vocational Pathways



... with potential

ITO-ITF proposal for gro



... use a Skills Aligned or Supply