

## Proposed reforms are a step too far

Industry training organisation, MITO, is concerned that the wide-ranging reforms proposed to vocational education in New Zealand will exacerbate skills shortages, seriously undermine the apprenticeship and training system and believes the proposal is a step too far.

"The current apprenticeship and training model managed by industry training organisations is effective and economically lean, but has been completely sidelined in the new proposals." says MITO chief executive Janet Lane.

For every \$1m invested in the tertiary sector, industry training organisation (ITO) arranged training qualifies 300 skilled workers, compared to polytechnics that qualify 50.

It is proposed that ITOs are disbanded and the responsibility of developing qualifications is transferred to "Industry Skills Bodies", with the delivery of training managed by one national polytechnic, combining the current 16 polytechnics. Under this structure, one polytechnic would take over the current 145,000 apprentices and trainees and 25,000 employers plus the existing 110,000 polytechnic enrolments.

"ITOs already work with industry effectively to develop the workforce development outcomes required through qualifications and training programmes. We provide training resources and assessment, often online, and we visit the apprentice and their employer in the workplace, where the training happens. Our educational performance indicators highlight our value and effectiveness."

"The polytechnic sector is in a perilous state; \$100m in extra funding has been invested in four polytechnics over the past year, with more under siege. We agree that the polytechnic sector needs to be stabilised. It will take some time to consolidate the sector. This should be the paramount priority and the first step in future proofing these valued community resources."

"The next step needs wider consultation with options for industry to consider. Simply transferring 145,000 ITO apprentices and learners to a newly formed national institution will create unnecessary disruption in this period of significant skills shortages across industries in New Zealand."

The Government has opened consultation on the proposed reforms until 27 March. "The proposals represent the largest shift in New Zealand's tertiary education and training system in over 25 years. MITO does not believe that a six-week period for consultation will provide sufficient time for robust debate and meaningful consideration of the far-reaching implications."

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