



APICULTURE
NEW ZEALAND

12 September 2024

Vocational Education Reforms

Ministry of Education

Wellington

Via email: VocationalEducation.Reforms@education.govt.nz

Tēnā koe

Re: Redesign of the vocational education and training system

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Vocational Education Reforms.

Apiculture New Zealand (ApiNZ) is the national body representing the apiculture industry in New Zealand. It covers the full range of participants, from hobbyist and commercial beekeepers to honey exporters, packers and suppliers. ApiNZ aims to support and deliver benefits to the New Zealand apiculture industry by supporting a thriving long-term future for New Zealand honeybee products and services, including having a strong bee health and biosecurity position.

The New Zealand apiculture industry has grown strongly over the past 20 years developing into a multi-million-dollar export sector, largely due to the growth and investment into mānuka honey. We have recently launched a New Zealand Honey Strategy aimed at doubling New Zealand's export honey export value.

To meet the ambitions for the sector in supporting sustainable growth based on value we will need to invest in skills and training across the value chain, from commercial beekeepers to those involved in the honey production. We will also need significant investment into productivity-enhancing technologies. We also need a strong industry voice in the design, delivery and funding of food and fibre VET.

Our submission, along with our primary sector colleagues recommends the creation of bespoke arrangements for VET in the food and fibre sector. We seek a strong voice and role for industry in the design, delivery and funding of food and fibre VET. Collectively, we identified the key principles that underpin a redesign and these were outlined in a letter to (dated 31 July) to Hon Penny Simmonds, the Tertiary Education Minister. Those key principles are worth reiterating and should inform any future model:

- Strong industry voice to shape VET
- Efficient and well targeted resource and funding allocation
- Clear focus on understanding, assessing and meeting the skill needs of industries
- Ability to act strategically to foster sufficient capability and capacity for training delivery
- A range of training delivery options that meet the needs of individual industries
- A strong quality assurance framework to ensure training programmes are fit for purpose

Apiculture New Zealand

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We also wish to confirm our shared view that a better option for consideration is an industry-led leadership and commissioning body that could incorporate some of the existing functions of Workforce Development Councils, Te Pūkenga and the Tertiary Education Commission.

Our concern is that ITP's have been unable to successfully provide appropriate levels of education and training to date that meet our specific sector needs. We do not support the notion that ITPs should be financially incentivised to engage with industry. This is an opportunity to reset how primary sector training is provided, looking at options that are genuinely industry-led.

We also make the point volume-based funding does not work for the apiculture industry given smaller numbers of in-work learners, many who are regionally and remotely spread.

Returning to a sole volume-based approach and reducing funding to support to workplace delivery to favour the ITP sector, will not assist industry to achieve economic growth, let alone deliver on the Government's goal of doubling exports.

The apiculture sector, along with the rest of the food and fibre sector as export focussed sectors, can support the Government's goal of doubling of exports, however we must have a well-functioning vocational education and training system that meets the needs of the industry. Our concern remains that the restructure as proposed will not meet the needs of the sector.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have in response to our submission.

Ngā mihi nui



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