



**Six Month Report  
March – September 2003**

# The First Six Months of Action

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## **Introduction**

Research conducted by Massey University revealed that business growth in Waitakere is being inhibited by a skill shortage. At the same time, the City has 5.1% registered unemployed, 20% of students leaving school without any qualifications 56% of the labour force working outside Waitakere. There is an opportunity to address these issues simultaneously. The Waitakere Employment and Skills Project seeks to do just that.

The Waitakere Employment and Skills Project is a collaborative, demand-led initiative addressing the City's skill needs, it firmly places employers in the drivers seat.

The Waitakere Employment and Skills Project (WESP) was launched by the Hon. Steve Maharey, Minister of Social Services and Employment on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2003. The project has used cross-sectoral and community collaboration and partnerships to investigate the skills and training needs in Waitakere City and to identify actions to address these and thus help to grow the local economy.

## **Background and Objectives**

The WESP developed from the Waitakere Local Employment Co-ordination Group which sought to take a more strategic and integrated approach to resolving Waitakere City's employment and skills issues. In order to learn more the skill demands in the city, the Auckland North Regional Commissioner of Work and Income commissioned Massey University to research the skill demands in the city's key sectors.

The Massey University research was completed and published in 2003. Key findings included:

- Labour and skills shortages exist in the city's key industries
- Skills shortages include industry-specific skills as well as generic skills (e.g. literacy, numeracy)
- The city has significant untapped potential (e.g. 49% of residents working outside the city, 21% of unemployed migrants have professional qualifications, 24% of school leavers in 2001 had no formal qualifications)
- A need for closer collaboration between schools, training providers and industry
- Employers prefer on-the-job training (e.g. apprenticeships) to other forms of training
- Employers place a high importance on "life skills" (e.g. positive and appropriate attitudes, work habits, presentation and communication skills) when hiring new staff

Following the publication of the research, working groups were established to investigate and to identify key goals in the areas of information, growth, skills and transitions. These working groups involved representatives from about 40 organisations including: the Waitakere City Council, Work and Income, Te Whanau O Waipareira Trust, the Tertiary Education Commission, Pacific organisations, local secondary schools, Waitakere employers, Enterprise Waitakere, Massey University, Ministry of Education, Waitemata Health, tertiary education providers and community-based organisations.

These working groups established the following key goals:

1. Accurate knowledge of labour demands informs decisions

2. Success is championed
3. Increase employers using structured workplace learning
4. Every student leaves school with a plan
5. Training meets industry needs
6. The Waitakere talent pool is maximised

The working groups also identified a number of actions that they wanted to implement in order to meet these goals. These became the actions that formed the basis of the WESP.

GOALS	ACTIONS
Accurate knowledge of labour demands informs decisions	Skill demand research programme
Success is championed	Waitakere Winners Programme
Increase employers using structured workplace learning	Structured workplace learning
Every Student leaves school with a plan	A targeted information programme
	A collaborative approach to the Gateway programme
	YouthWorks Waitakere
	An integrated transition pathway
Training meets industry needs	A Waitakere job fair
	Collaborative trade training
The Waitakere talent pool is maximised	Pre assessment to ensure successful job seeker matches
	An integrated approach to the provision of ESOL
	Establish a Migrant and refugee Information and Support Service

The Steering Group of WESP established a Project Manager position for an initial 12 month period with resources from the Waitakere City Council and Work and Income. Enterprise Waitakere has agreed to act as the employer and provide the office space and support for this position. Tania Jones (formerly Associate Campus Director of UNITEC @Waitakere) started on a full time basis from 12<sup>th</sup> May 2003. The purpose of the position is to drive the development and implementation the Waitakere Employment and Skills Action Plan in partnership with committed lead organisations.

**The Waitakere Employment and Skills Project takes a demand led approach, not the traditional supply-side approach.**

**Key driving principle:** Demand – led approach with collaboration and commitment across industry, community, local and central government. The Steering group has representatives from the following lead agencies;

- o Enterprise Waitakere
- o Work & Income
- o Massey University
- o Tertiary Education Commission
- o Waitakere City Council
- o Waitakere Workers Education Association
- o NZ Trade and Enterprise
- o Industry Training Federation
- o Community Employment Group

The traditional labour supply side approach focuses on barriers to employment faced by those not currently in work. This approach asks 'What is wrong with you?'

Solutions are focussed on addressing the issues those individuals face. In addition, there tends to be an emphasis on off-job training with poor linkage to actual jobs and tertiary training designed around large employment situations.

A demand-led approach focuses on the needs of the employer and how these needs of the employer are met with the available labour pool. This approach emphasises the need to have a clear knowledge of current and future industry labour requirements, starting from actual jobs and working backwards. There is also an emphasis on up-skilling current employees as well as equipping those currently or potentially unemployed to fill labour needs. The emphasis is focussed on on-the-job training and clear education provider/industry links.

## Strategic Context

### Action within existing strategic frameworks

The focus of the Waitakere Employment and Skills Project is tangible, practical action. This action is developed under the guidance of existing strategic frameworks such as the central government's Tertiary Education Strategy, Employment Strategy and Pathways document and the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy. In addition, this project directly links to the Waitakere City Council Wellbeing Strategy and several of the strategies specific calls to action.

It is acknowledged that there are a lot of programmes already happening. This project is not designed to re-litigate or duplicate these, nor 'cut-and-paste' existing strategies, projects and activities. Taking a demand-led approach, a skill demand research programme will establish industry demand for skills. This information will inform and drive the implementation and focus of numerous action projects. The purpose of these action projects is to harness the current labour market supply to meet the skill demands of local business. The priority populations for the project include youth, Maori, Pacific Peoples, Migrants, refugees and sole parents.

## Issues

### Action to Date

The project's original 12 actions are being amalgamated in practise in order to consolidate implementation and funding strategies as the following ten initiatives illustrate.

a. Skill Demand Research

*Goal: To ensure accurate knowledge of labour demand informs decisions*

This involves researching the specific skill shortages in Waitakere so that education providers can make decisions about courses and school students, job seekers and adults undertaking retraining can make informed choices. It will allow current and anticipated future skill gaps to be identified.

Planning for the project is almost complete and Massey University is expected to start the first phase of research within the next three months, with provisional results available in December.

b. Targeted information programme

*Goal: To champion success and to ensure every student leaves school with a plan*

Phase 1 of this project involves the production and testing of a DVD which highlights and promotes local industry employment opportunities. The DVD focuses on trades and workplace learning opportunities and is primarily targeted at senior secondary school students and their parents. It aims to inspire students to consider their career options and to seek out more information. Following the DVD launch other mediums such as a website, career teacher resources, road show and job fair will be used to highlight employment and career opportunities in local industries.

Phase 1 of this initiative is underway with the contacted services of Zoomslide Media and funding has been secured. During phase 1, a draft DVD comprising 3 industry clips will be tested on students and teachers in order to determine whether the delivery of the message is appropriate. Following feedback, the remainder of the industry clips will be completed, refined and retested on students, parents and career advisors.

There are also plans to link a Waitakere Job Fair with the annual Waitakere Secondary Schools Career Expo organised by career advisers from the local secondary schools. Planning for the career expo is underway and elements of the Job Fair will be incorporated. There may also be a separate 'road show' event to complete the Job Fair concept.

c. Collaborative approach to the Gateway programme

*Goal: To ensure every student leaves school with a plan*

Gateway is a Tertiary Education Commission programme that allows senior secondary school students to incorporate workplace learning with their school-based studies. Six Waitakere secondary schools are participating in Gateway in 2003 and Enterprise Waitakere is brokering placements with employers. In order to maximise the impact of Gateway, this initiative will involve a collaborative approach between schools, industry, Industry Training Organisations and Modern Apprenticeships co-ordinators.

This initiative is underway. By the start of July 2003, 184 students were participating in the programme and up to 200 were participating by the end of that month. In 2004 all secondary schools in Waitakere city will be involved in the programme with a target of 250 students in placements.

d. YouthWorks Waitakere

*Goal: To ensure every student leaves school with a plan*

YouthWorks Waitakere is one of the Youth Employment Regional Pilots funded by the Ministry of Economic Development. It is supported by key stakeholders in the community such as Work and Income, the Tertiary Education Commission, West Auckland Principals Association, Enterprise Waitakere and the Waitakere City Council.

YouthWorks Waitakere links into the collaborative approach to Gateway programme. It targets 16-18 year olds participating in Gateway programme who are disadvantaged in the local labour market and are at risk of becoming long-term unemployed. All Gateway participants (up to a maximum of 200) will receive an individualised career action plan. Twenty of these participants will also be selected to be placed into industry cadetships which will involve full-time employment with on-the-job training leading towards apprenticeship agreements.

This initiative is starting its selection process of both employers and cadets. All work placements will have commenced by January 2004.

e. Integrated Transition Pathway

*Goal: To ensure every student leaves school with a plan*

This action involves three separate initiatives. Firstly developing an accurate overview of what career provision is currently available within secondary schools in the city and sharing best practise ideas and programmes, identifying provision gaps and being instrumental in introducing remedies.

Secondly to provide a targeted, integrated transition pathway for Waitakere's senior secondary school students that will align the current Star and Gateway programmes to industry and to pre-apprenticeship training and Modern Apprenticeships where appropriate as well as highlighting a best practice career programme within Waitakere secondary schools.

Finally the development of the concept of a 5plus year commitment to student career planning and employment establishment, starting from year 11 in secondary schools with a targeted career programme delivered through existing curriculum. This programme would be followed up with at least 2 years of career support available after leaving school to access the service if career planning or guidance was required.

f. Collaborative training response

*Goal: To ensure training meets industry needs and that every student leaves school with a plan*

This action involves taking a collaborative approach to trade training (involving schools, industry, Industry Training Organisations, training providers and central government agencies) by providing a clear pathway from school to workplace and tertiary trade training

Partnerships between schools and employers will be highlighted and a brokerage arrangement established to utilise existing facilities and expertise within schools and other training providers for the benefit of life long learning, with both employer and employee up-skilling.

g. Matching through pre-assessment

*Goal: To ensure training meets industry needs*

This action aims to pre-assess job seekers against the competencies and attributes required by industry in order to minimise poor matches between job seekers and jobs. It will also allow competency gaps to be identified so job seekers can be encouraged to take up targeted training. The action will focus on the piloting and development of a pre-assessment process and policy.

Trials and credibility studies are underway into a web-based tool that can assess personality type, career maturity, skill, interests and aptitude in order to match people with employment opportunities in conjunction with guidance from a career advisor or case manager. Once studies are complete this tool or similar of its type will be promoted as a career planning and development system for organisations such as schools, Work and Income and the developing migrant service in the city.

h. Integrated approach to ESOL

*Goal: To maximise the Waitakere talent pool*

Integrating the provision of ESOL in Waitakere City, looks to co-ordinate the providers in the city who currently offer a range of ESOL courses, from beginner levels through to advanced English to workplace language training. Identification and collaboration regarding English skill levels and assessment techniques will result in clear pathways from beginner through to workplace language courses and tertiary English qualifications.

Providers meet every six weeks and are currently working on a collaborative city ESOL framework, a provision directory and agreement on skill level identifiers. The current group will then establish an ESOL provider/ sector advisory body to continue the work. This action will also develop a central information collection for Waitakere City with details on courses available, providers, funding and community demographics, which progresses the work already being done on the provider directory and will look for funding for a person to implement the information collection and dissemination initiative. The provision directory will be published by the end of December.

i. Migrant and refugee service

*Goal: To maximise the Waitakere talent pool*

The focus of this action was initially to establish and promote a migrant and refugee information and support service that met Waitakere's needs. The WESP has since adopted the existing New Out West project (part of the wider Waitakere Wellbeing Strategy collaborative process) to meet this action. New Out West has both an access to information and an employment project. The first phase of the employment project is focusing on mobile job hunting and service provider seminars and assessments. Further phases will centre on work experience brokering and an industry outreach programme.

The WESP will facilitate and assist New Out West with resources where appropriate. Funding is currently being sought for New Out West's employment project.

j. Structured workplace learning

*Goal: To increase the employers using structured workplace learning*

This programme aims to increase the number of employers using structured workplace learning. With 80% of 2010's workers already participating in today's workforce, the up-skilling and re-skilling of the existing workforce is necessary to meet the dynamic skill needs of industry. Increasing the number of employers using structured workplace learning should contribute to ensuring that the current workforce is being equipped to meet future skill needs. The government has allocated \$800,000 in its 2003 Budget to promote structured workplace learning. How this will be spent has still yet to be determined.

Some discussions have been held with Industry Training Organisations. Under the Tertiary Education Strategy, ITOs are required to encourage employers to undertake workplace learning. The WESP will complement this by raising employers' awareness of ITOs and their role in workplace learning through work done in all project actions.

### **Relationships Built**

Key relationships are being built with all Waitakere Secondary schools, both at Principal level and with classroom teachers especially Careers Advisors and Gateway Co-ordinators. Through Gateway and the Ignite Waitakere information programme relationships are being built with local businesses and employers. Established links are being reinforced and networks extended through all currently existing and relevant ITOs to the Waitakere region, with a particular focus on Modern Apprenticeship coordinators, ITO Marketing teams and CEOs. Industry associations, where they exist, have been invited to participate in numerous ways with the project. Other tertiary providers have been approached to partner with the actions appropriate for them, and Community groups and community initiative projects have been approached to add strength to commitments.

The steering group already represents large organisations and government departments and community stakeholder groups who are kept informed of achievements. Other regional initiatives from around the country have been contacted and ideas shared regarding projects, information dissemination and research.

### **Resources**

The Project Manager is funded from grants from Council and Work & Income. Enterprise Waitakere is acting as the employer and provides the office space and support for this position. With the continuing success of this project and the number of actions to be implemented and maintained the requirements for this position will expand, including equipment, materials, travel expenses and administrative support.

### **Conclusion**

The First Six Months of Action have indeed moved the Waitakere Employment and Skills Project from Action Plan to action on the ground. Many key relationships have been established, key partner brought on board, and most initiatives have been planned and phase one of implementation is underway.

The key to the continuing success of the project is the commitment and buy in of Council, community organisations and a whole of government approach from relevant central government departments regarding funding and implementation support.