

Event backgrounder: Meeting with primary industry leaders to discuss your vision on Reform of Vocational Education

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
From:	Richard Forgan, Programme Director
Date:	26 February 2019
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Purpose

1. You are scheduled to meet with primary industry sector leaders on 28 February 2019 from 3pm at the Ministry for Primary Industries, 34-38 Bowen St, Room 1.01.
2. We recommend that this event backgrounder is proactively released.

Information about the workshop and your attendance

3. This is the first of six meetings held monthly between the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and primary sector leaders. Their discussions will focus on three areas: education, training and employment for the primary industries. The focus of this first meeting will be on horticulture and agriculture, which is of particular interest given the cessation of training at Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre.
4. The meeting starts at 2pm for introductions, confirming terms of reference and other housekeeping. Your speaking slot **starts at 3pm for 10 to 15 minutes** followed by an opportunity for questions from the attendees. Attendees will be interested in your vision on the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) proposals, and how these will benefit the broader skills pipeline in the primary industries, particularly in relation to agriculture and horticulture. This event backgrounder provides you with information on key participants and matters that may be raised.
5. At this meeting, we expect that the primary sector leaders will ask you questions about how the RoVE proposals will relate specifically to the primary industry sector. Participants are also likely to ask questions about the consultation and engagement process, and how they can become involved in this. Andy Jackson Group Manager, Tertiary Education at the Ministry of Education will also be present. He will be available to continue taking questions after you leave.

Tertiary education issues in the primary sector

6. The primary industries dominate New Zealand's tradeable sector, which in turn largely determines New Zealand's per capita income and living standards. Productivity gains in the primary industries therefore have positive, economy-wide impacts.
7. Primary industries are, and will continue to be, major users and creators of knowledge and technology. As farming, processing systems and value chains get increasingly sophisticated, the food and fibres require a greater range of skills to create value, manage risk and take full advantage of increased market opportunities. Specialist skills will also be needed in the areas of food safety, biosecurity, sustainability and animal welfare.

Primary industry careers are not popular

8. Skills demand and supply are not well matched and therefore constrain primary industry productivity growth. Participants may raise how more young people can access training opportunities in the primary industries.
9. The primary industries face image problems associated with working conditions, career pathways, safety, and environmental impacts. The industries must address these issues.
10. The TEC has established an Industry Advisory Group (IAG) to advise on how opportunities in the industries can be promoted to young people and to learners more generally.
11. The IAG considers that the "primary industries" brand has negative workplace and wider societal connotations, and is limited to only one part of the value chain. The term "food and fibres" industries better reflects the complexity of the industries and the richness of the opportunities they provide. The IAG is keen to rebrand the industries, and to build awareness of career opportunities and the learning pathways to them. This work should focus on young learners at school, on secondary-tertiary transitions, and on potential learners outside the industries.
12. The primary industries are a priority focus area for TEC's careers and investment functions. TEC are working actively with Primary ITO, industry and MPI to promote to potential learners the career opportunities in the food and fibres industries, and pathways to them.

Tertiary Education Funding

13. A significant concern for the primary industry tertiary education sector is the current funding rates. Industry training rates are largely adequate for centralised and urban-based businesses which are larger, more stable and manage larger cohorts of trainees. However, the primary sector has significant geographic factors, fragmented industry structure, increasing market risk, and workplace safety concerns. These are often coupled with high learner needs in some cohorts. RoVE will give the Government the opportunity to ensure that funding rates better support the costs of quality education and training for regional industries such as primary.

Other matters

14. Participants may wish to discuss how best to address the impacts of Taratahi's liquidation on primary industries training. The TEC, NZQA and other parties have worked together to protect the interests of Taratahi's learners, including by transitioning them to other providers.

Questions you may like to ask

15. Given the specific makeup of the meeting, it is likely they will hold strong feelings about the historic delivery in the agriculture and horticulture sectors, and whether this has offered the skills necessary for industry and businesses.
16. You may wish to take the opportunity to ask the attendees about how they would work with a New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology, if this proposal progresses. For example, would it be best to engage with a centralised entity, or with the regional campuses themselves, and what type of engagement would help to enable industry to ensure they are heard?



Richard Forgan

Programme Director

Tertiary Education Commission

26 February 2018

Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

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Appendix One: Attendee list

Participants confirmed as attending the meeting include:

- Anaru Smiler, Federation of Māori Authorities, Chief Operating Officer;
- Ben Allomes, Hopelands Dairies and Primary Industry Good Employer Award winner;
- Chelsea Millar, Digital Communications Expert from Grassroots Media (marketing and public relations consultancy);
- Chris Lewis, Federated Farmers Dairy Chairman and Employment spokesperson;
- Erin Simpson, Capability Development Manager New Zealand Apples & Pears;
- Geoff Taylor, Associate Strategy and Investment Leader Dairy NZ;
- Linda Sissons, Chief Executive Primary ITO;
- Mark Paine, innovation research and strategic advisor;
- Michelle Glogau, Chief Executive Growing NZ;
- Miles Anderson, Chair of Federated Farmers national meat and wool section;
- Paul Goldstone, Policy Manager Meat Industry Association;
- Penny Nelson, Deputy Director General Policy and Trade Ministry for Primary Industries (Chair);
- Sam McIvor, Chief Executive Officer Beef+Lamb NZ;
- Ruth Shinoda, Director Ministry for Primary Industries

Appendix Two: Media commentary

The media comments below are from attendees of the meeting, and may help you to understand their particular stances on the Reform of Vocational Education proposals.

Federated Farmers fully supports the government's determination to put the spotlight on vocational education and look for better solutions for all Kiwis learning on the job, especially rural Kiwis.

"There's no question the current system struggles to deliver the vocational training that the agriculture, horticulture, forestry and other land-based industries require.

"We are looking forward to contributing to this discussion and will be encouraging our members to do the same," Andrew says.

"We will be highlighting the importance of keeping vocational training in the regions. Teaching farming on farms, not online."

Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) is concerned that the closure of the Taratahi Agricultural Training Institute (Taratahi) will have a serious impact on the ability of the primary sector to develop the workforce capability it requires. B+LNZ will be using the results of its 2018 review of sheep and beef sector capability needs to help design a better solution for sector skill development.

Dr Linda Sissons says "Our industries want smart, innovative and motivated young people looking for a great career and the Trades Academy helps both them and businesses get a head start on that path."

Dr Sissons says it's disappointing that Taratahi is no longer available to provide training but the education, government and primary sectors need to work together to ensure vocational training is strengthened.

Appendix Three: Talking points

1. *How will your proposal strengthen the employment opportunities in the primary industries?*

Centres of vocational excellence for the primary sector and other industries could be created and become powerhouses of expertise that could cover key sectors and industries, which could be broad, for example agriculture, or specific, for example viticulture.

2. *Each region is unique with different challenges, how will your proposal recognise these differences and work within them?*

To ensure a strong regional presence, each region would have a Regional Leadership Committee to identify local skills needs and link with regional economic development strategies and action plans. The committees would have strong local government and industry participation, and representation of and a strategic partnership with local iwi and Pacific communities.

3. *How has the government worked with industry following Taratahi's receivership?*

TEC, NZQA and other parties have worked together to protect the interests of Taratahi's learners, including by transitioning them to other providers. TEC, industry and the Primary ITO are discussing possible new working farm models to lift the quality and volume of vocational education and training for the pastoral agriculture industries especially.

4. *There is a need for more highly skilled people in primary industries, how will your proposals improve the current situation?*

An integrated system could better meet the needs of learners and employers and link provider-based and work-based training. The proposed changes will position the vocational education system to deliver for the future. It will also help to ensure that industry has more of a say in the types of skills needed for industry success, and to ensure that education providers are flexible in providing both work-based and provider-based educational training.

5. *How will you ensure the voice of industry is heard through your proposals?*

In the proposed new system design, the national skills leadership role of Industry Skills Bodies (ISBs) would be complemented by employer and/or industry leadership at a regional level. Employers and industry would have more choice about how they engage with vocational education providers to meet the skill needs of their current and future workforce. They would also have a choice of education providers to work with, rather than having to arrange on-job training via their ITO. Better integration of workplace and provider based vocational education programmes would enable employees to gain the skills that employers and industry need.

6. *How can we get more involved in the consultation and engagement process?*

The Korero Mātauranga website (the Education Conversation) lists a number of events we are holding around the country, including community engagement days. We are also currently arranging some industry association forums, and will put information on our website as soon as these are arrangements. We would also strongly encourage you to provide a written submission in response to the proposals.

Information on the consultation process can be accessed by visiting the Reform of Vocational Education page on the Kōrero Mātauranga website - Feedback can also be provided by email to vocationaleducation.reform@education.govt.nz or contact the Reform of Vocational Education team on 0800 462 543.