

Advice from Muka Tangata to TEC for investment in 2027

Please note that due to the disestablishment of Workforce Development Councils in December 2025, this advice has been published early, pending approval from TEC.

This advice was submitted on 31 October 2025, and it is not anticipated that any further changes or amendments will be required once TEC has approved the advice.

Context for the advice

Improving skills to raise productivity

The Food and Fibre Chief Executives have recently come together to create a [Food and Fibre Workforce Capability Strategy](#). The strategy is focused on further developing a skilled, adaptable workforce that can lift productivity, meet customer demands, and navigate a complex global trade environment.

The Government has set a target to double the value of exports over the next 10 years. Food and fibre industries will be a big part of achieving this goal, as the sector currently accounts for over 80% of the value of merchandised exports.

Achieving that goal demands more than increased output. Workforce skills acquisition and training are key components to raising productivity. This will mean that building the skills of the existing workforce will be just as important as focusing on training new people for jobs.

The Strategy highlights the importance of work-based learning for the food and fibre sector and concerns about workforce development being driven by enrolment numbers and learner-led demand, rather than targeted investment in high-impact skills. In particular, food and fibre industries are looking to ensure that there is training for specialised skill sets that are essential for productivity but are often overlooked due to the commercial pressures of enrolment-driven funding models.

In our advice, we have not been specific about mode at a qualification level. We generally recommend a preference for workplace-based training as part of a mix of provision across all of our industries. While this could include both work-based training and campus-based learning, all training should include a strong component of practical 'on job' experience in a workplace setting.

Workforce growth and changing composition

In the five years leading up to COVID, most of our industries experienced a period of workforce growth.

MPI workforce forecasts have indicated that many of our industries will experience increases in their workforce numbers through to 2032. These forecasts show that there is an expected change to the mix of skills that will be needed, with an increased need for more high-skilled workers. Managers and semi-autonomous roles (including in industries where workforces may not be increasing) are highlighted amongst these changes.

More skilled kaimahi Māori will be important for achieving the Government's goal to double the value of exports over the next ten years. By 2040, about one quarter of the potential workforce under 40 will be Māori, therefore the ways in which the VET system works for ongoing Māori training and skill development is essential. For more detailed information on Māori in the food and fibre sector, please have a look at Te Haumako – Muka Tangata's Māori Workforce Development Plan.

Learner trends

Despite past and forecast workforce growth, learner numbers have continued to fall. This, combined with low retention rates, means that the 'supply' pipeline has not kept up with demand for skilled workers.

We have now launched the beta version of our [Skills Forecasting tool](#) which indicates that in a business as usual scenario between 2020 and 2050, whereby current workplace-based training levels are only maintained, there will not be enough trained people to meet the skills demand from industry.

Responding to industry and learner preference for shorter training

In response to calls for more flexible, shorter qualifications which fit around seasons of work, we have continued to develop micro-credentials.

Setting out an overview of each industry groupings skills needs

In addition to the template setting out the changes to the advice provided last year, we have included our assessment of the full set of our qualifications for each industry, detailing each industry's situation, skills and workforce needs, and industry's prioritisation of qualifications (see Appendix A).

SECTION A – TEC investment advice for 2026

Are there any changes you want to make to the advice provided last year?



Where no changes are instructed, the advice will be assumed to be the same as it was for 2026.

Please complete the *Any changes to advice* column rather than editing the first three columns. This will make it clearer what has been changed.

Qualification or credential	Goal	TEC response	Any changes to advice
New Zealand Diploma in Primary Industry Business Management (Level 5) [2221]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Seafood Processing (Level 3): Fish and Fish Products, Live Holding, Cleaning and Sanitation, and Seafood Logistics [3130]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Pest Operations (Level 3): Rural Pest Control, Rural Pest Monitoring, and Urban Pest Control [2443]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Farming Systems) (Level 3) [2220]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Level 4) [Stranded] [2212]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Harvesting Operations (Level 3): Basic Machine Operation, Breaking Out - Cable, Landing Operations, and Tree Felling [2326]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Diploma in Horticulture Production (Level 5) [Stranded] [2666]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills (Level 3): Optional strands in Specialist Equipment, and Infrastructure [2215]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3) [2223]	<i>Mode change - WBL wanted</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	

New Zealand Certificate in Forestry Operations (Level 3): Basic Machine Operations, Mensuration, Production Thinning, Planting, Pruning, and Thin to Waste [2334]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Animal Healthcare Assisting (Level 4): Companion Animal Healthcare, Equine Healthcare, and Rural Animal Healthcare [4388]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3) [3869]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (General) (Level 3) [2677] (to be replaced by below 2678)	<i>Decrease</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	Note that our main concern has been the growth of what appears to be 'hobby' learners that are not intending to enter relevant industries. Our expectation is that TEC will consider proposals from providers to deliver programmes against the NZC Hort (General) where they show that they are responding to industry need and/or demonstrate employment outcomes for graduates.
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3) [Stranded] [2678]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture Production (Level 4) [Stranded] [2676]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture Services (Level 4): [Stranded] [2674]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Production Management (Level 5) [Stranded] [2211]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Skills (Level 2): Optional strand in Self-Management and Employability Skills [2218]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (level 6): Companion Animal Veterinary Nursing, and Equine Veterinary Nursing [4389]	<i>Increase</i>	Priority in Plan Guidance	
New Zealand Certificate in Forestry Leadership (Level 5) [4826]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
New Zealand Certificate in Assistant Trainer (Level 4) [4825]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	

Business Forestry Leadership (Micro-Credential) (Level 5) [4979]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Core Construction of Forestry Roads (Micro-Credential) (Level 3) [4980]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Core Forestry Leadership (Micro-Credential) (Level 5) [4977]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Forestry Deadman Installation (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [4981]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Forestry Earthworks Plant Operation (Micro-Credential) (Level 3) [4975]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Forestry Foundation Skills (Micro-credential) (Level 2) [5040]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Forestry Operations: Log Scaling (Micro-credential) (Level 4) [4925]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Forestry River Crossing Construction (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [4974]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Forestry Road Pavement (Micro-Credential) (Level 3) [4973]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Geotextile Installation in Forestry Infrastructure (micro-credential) (Level 3) [4982]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Forestry Roads (Micro-Credential) (Level 3) [4976]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Industry Foundation Skills (Level 2) [4918]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Operational Forestry Leadership (Micro-Credential) (Level 5) [4978]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Assess and manage risks to freshwater from horticultural production (Micro-credential) (Level 4) [5055]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Introduction to Aquaculture (Micro-credential) (Level 2) [5036]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Introduction to Commercial Fishing (Micro-credential) (Level 2) [5052]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Introduction to Shearing (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [5068]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	

Shearing Essentials (Junior) (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [5066]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Wool Handling Fundamentals (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [5067]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Wool Pressing Skills (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [5065]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Emerging Leadership in People, Food and Fibre Industries (Micro-credential) (Level 4) [5044]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Groundspread Nutrient Application for Primary Industry (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [4914]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Irrigation - Full pipe water measurement device installation and commission (Micro-credential) (Level 5) [5004]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Irrigation - Full pipe water measurement device verification (Micro-credential) (Level 5) [5002]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
Irrigation - Water measurement telemetry system installation and commission (Micro-credential) (Level 5) [5003]	<i>Increase</i>	Noted in Plan Guidance as new qualification/credential	
New Zealand Certificate in Arboriculture (Level 5): Supervisory Operations, and Technical Operations [2670]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Diploma in Arboriculture (Level 6) [2669]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Industry Operations (Planning and Monitoring) (Level 4): Harvesting, and Silviculture [2330]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Operations (Level 4): Mechanised Land Preparation, and Mechanised Thinning [4174]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Harvesting Operations (Level 4) [4175]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Harvesting Operations (Level 4): Cable Extraction, Ground Based Extraction, Mobile Cable Yarder, Head Breaker Out, Loading, Log Making, Mechanised Felling, Mechanised Processing, Spotting, Swing Yarder Extraction, and Tree Felling [2327]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Tree Felling and Clearing (Non-Production) (Level 3): Optional strand in Hazardous Tree Felling [2336]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Diploma in Forest Management (Level 6) [2329]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	

New Zealand Diploma in Landscape (Level 5) with strands in Construction, and Design [2888]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Agrichemical Application (Level 4) with strands in Aquatic, Broadacre, Tree and Vine Horticultural, Targeted Weed Control, and Total Vegetation Control [3984]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Diploma in Horticulture Production (Level 6): Process Improvement, and Product Development [2667]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Aquaculture (Level 3): Hatchery, Fish, and Shellfish [3135]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Aquaculture (Level 4): Hatchery, Fish, Shellfish, and Aquaculture Diving [3134]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Animal Care (Level 3): Companion Animals, Equine, and Rural Animals [2487]	<i>Decrease</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Diploma in Rural Animal Veterinary Technology (Level 6) [4391]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	Industry feedback: The shortage of skilled large animal technicians is acute, and expanding training capacity is essential to sustain rural veterinary services. Prioritising the NZRAVT will help address workforce gaps that are already limiting service delivery. Given the critical role of agricultural exports in New Zealand's economy, investment in this area directly supports the production of high-quality exports and the resilience of the food and fibre sector.
New Zealand Certificate in Equine Racing (Level 4): Thoroughbred Racing Jockey, Harness Driver/Trainer, and Harness Racing Driver [4221]	Replace <i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	Have updated this from old 2374, previously note said to replace with 4221. 2374 last date for entry is December 2025.
New Zealand Certificate in Seafood Processing (Level 4) [3131]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Equine Skills (Level 2) [2375]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Certificate in Rural Servicing (Level 4) [3520]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement - small number of providers	
New Zealand Diploma in Arboriculture (Level 6) [2669]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement	
New Zealand Certificate in Sports Turf (Level 5) [2675]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement	
New Zealand Certificate in Pork Production (Management) (Level 4): Optional strand in Pig Farm Production Planning [4222]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement	

New Zealand Certificate in Poultry Management (Level 4): Poultry Egg Production, Poultry Hatchery, and Poultry Rearing [2933]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement	
New Zealand Certificate in Poultry Production (Level 3): Poultry Egg Production, Poultry Hatchery, and Poultry Rearing [2932]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement	
New Zealand Certificate in Pest Management (Level 4): Pest Animal, and Pest Plant [2444]	<i>Increase</i>	Engagement	

SECTION B – New advice for 2027

Are there qualifications or credentials that you want to provide advice on that were not part of last year's advice?

Qualification or credential	Work-based, provider-based or all	Specific regions?	Change you are seeking (increase, decrease, change)	Information regarding workforce shortage
Example: <i>New Zealand Certificate in Security (Foundation) (Level 3) (3642)</i>	<i>WBL only</i>	<i>All regions</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>projections show an expected growth of 3.1% pa for Security Officers between 2022 to 2028 (from 8,782 to 10,584) see the relevant workforce development plan LINK</i>
New Zealand Certificate in Equine Skills (Level 3): Harness Racing Stable Assistant, Thoroughbred Raceday Strapper, Thoroughbred Stable Assistant, Thoroughbred Racing Track Rider, and Sporthorse Stable Assistant [2376]				Industry has asked that funding for this qualification be a medium priority to support the progression of those entering the industry from the greyhound sector.
New Zealand Certificate in Seafood with strands in Aquaculture, Seafood Processing and Commercial Fishing (Level 5) (3129)			Increase	A review of the suite of Seafood qualifications has been completed recently and it is anticipated that this programme will be ready for delivery in 2027.
Fell Non-pine Species Trees (Micro-Credential) (Level 4) (5278)			NEW	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of skill standards and micro-credentials in machine-assisted felling in response to identified industry needs. This development was initiated following a Court Ordered Enforceable Understanding (COEU) prompted by a fatality during the performance of this task. During 2025, the project has been undertaken in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and with input and support from key stakeholders across the forestry and arboriculture sectors.

Machine-assisted Felling as a Machine Operator (Micro-Credential) (Level 4) (5279)			NEW	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of skill standards and micro-credentials in machine-assisted felling in response to identified industry needs. This development was initiated following a Court Ordered Enforceable Understanding (COEU) prompted by a fatality during the performance of this task. During 2025, the project has been undertaken in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and with input and support from key stakeholders across the forestry and arboriculture sectors.
Machine-assisted Felling as a Tree Faller (Micro-Credential) (Level 4) (5277)			NEW	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of skill standards and micro-credentials in machine-assisted felling in response to identified industry needs. This development was initiated following a Court Ordered Enforceable Understanding (COEU) prompted by a fatality during the performance of this task. During 2025, the project has been undertaken in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and with input and support from key stakeholders across the forestry and arboriculture sectors.
Manage a Worksite for a Tree Operation (Micro-Credential) (Level 4) (5280)			NEW	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of skill standards and micro-credentials in machine-assisted felling in response to identified industry needs. This development was initiated following a Court Ordered Enforceable Understanding (COEU) prompted by a fatality during the performance of this task. During 2025, the project has been undertaken in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and with input and support from key stakeholders across the forestry and arboriculture sectors.

Plan and fell trees using advanced techniques in a tree felling operation (Micro-Credential) (Level 4) (5282)			NEW	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of skill standards and micro-credentials in machine-assisted felling in response to identified industry needs. This development was initiated following a Court Ordered Enforceable Understanding (COEU) prompted by a fatality during the performance of this task. During 2025, the project has been undertaken in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and with input and support from key stakeholders across the forestry and arboriculture sectors.
Prepare for and Execute Machine-Assisted Felling of Small Trees as a Tree Faller (Micro-Credential) (Level 3) (5281)			NEW	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of skill standards and micro-credentials in machine-assisted felling in response to identified industry needs. This development was initiated following a Court Ordered Enforceable Understanding (COEU) prompted by a fatality during the performance of this task. During 2025, the project has been undertaken in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and with input and support from key stakeholders across the forestry and arboriculture sectors.
Conduct and Compile Discharge Measurement - Methods and Platforms (Micro-credential) (Level 5) (5410)			NEW	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials whilst reviewing the Level 5 qualification and unit standards for Field Hydrology. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review, which identified that several methods in the existing standards were outdated. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders. This work triggered the Water Quality micro credential and skills standards

				development which is currently in delivery phase.
Conduct and Compile Discharge Measurement - Wading (Micro-credential) (Level 5) (5409)			NEW	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials whilst reviewing the Level 5 qualification and unit standards for Field Hydrology. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review, which identified that several methods in the existing standards were outdated. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders. This work triggered the Water Quality micro credential and skills standards development which is currently in delivery phase.
Construct and Evaluate Hydrometric Rating Curves (Micro-credential) (Level 5) (5408)			NEW	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials whilst reviewing the Level 5 qualification and unit standards for Field Hydrology. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review, which identified that several methods in the existing standards were outdated. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders. This work triggered the Water Quality micro credential and skills standards development which is currently in delivery phase.
Process and Analyse Hydrometric Data (Micro-credential) (Level 5) 5411			NEW	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials whilst reviewing the Level 5 qualification and unit standards for Field Hydrology. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review, which identified that several methods in the existing standards were outdated. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by

				input from key stakeholders. This work triggered the Water Quality micro credential and skills standards development which is currently in delivery phase.
Care of the pig breeding herd (Micro-credential) (Level 3)			In development	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials and reviewed the Level 3 to 5 qualifications and unit standards for Pork. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders.
Care of Weaner and Grower Pigs (Micro-credential) (Level 3)			In development	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials and reviewed the Level 3 to 5 qualifications and unit standards for Pork. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders.
Manage Pig Health (Micro-credential) (Level 4)			In development	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials and reviewed the Level 3 to 5 qualifications and unit standards for Pork. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders.
Manage Growing Pigs (Micro-credential) (Level 4)			In development	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials and reviewed the Level 3 to 5 qualifications and unit standards for Pork. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders.

Manage Pig Reproduction (Micro-credential) (Level 4)			In development	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials and reviewed the Level 3 to 5 qualifications and unit standards for Pork. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders.
Supervise Pig Operations (Micro-credential) (Level 4)			In development	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials and reviewed the Level 3 to 5 qualifications and unit standards for Pork. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders.
Manage Pig Production (Micro-credential) (Level 5)			In development	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials and reviewed the Level 3 to 5 qualifications and unit standards for Pork. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders.
Work with Hydrometric Data (Micro-credential) (Level 5)			In development	Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials whilst reviewing the Level 5 qualification and unit standards for Field Hydrology. This work was initiated as part of a scheduled review, which identified that several methods in the existing standards were outdated. The project was carried out in close consultation with Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members and supported by input from key stakeholders. This work triggered the Water Quality micro credential and skills standards

				development which is currently in delivery phase.
Design Irrigation Pipe and Pump Systems (Micro-credential) (Level 5)			In development	<p>Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials and reviewed three of the Irrigation qualifications in Systems Performance, Management and Design. Through initial engagement, with our industry partners IrrigationNZ, Muka Tangata has identified a requirement for shorter more flexible training and an opportunity to enhance potential pathways between these qualifications, while ensuring that they are fit-for-purpose for industry, ākonga and our hāpori (communities).</p> <p>Numbers for the current qualifications are low, with one qualification having zero enrolments since development making it pertinent to review the content, structure and credit value of all qualifications, standards and micro credentials collectively to ensure they are fit for purpose. NZ Irrigation have also indicated a strong preference to review the entire suite of qualifications.</p>
Manage and Commission Irrigation Installations (Micro-credential) (Level 5)			In development	<p>Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials and reviewed three of the Irrigation qualifications in Systems Performance, Management and Design. Through initial engagement, with our industry partners IrrigationNZ, Muka Tangata has identified a requirement for shorter more flexible training and an opportunity to enhance potential pathways between these qualifications, while ensuring that they are fit-for-purpose for industry, ākonga and our hāpori (communities).</p> <p>Numbers for the current qualifications are low, with one qualification having zero enrolments since development</p>

				making it pertinent to review the content, structure and credit value of all qualifications, standards and micro credentials collectively to ensure they are fit for purpose. NZ Irrigation have also indicated a strong preference to review the entire suite of qualifications.
Irrigation System Requirements for Commercial Operations (Micro-credential) (Level 4)			In development	<p>Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials and reviewed three of the Irrigation qualifications in Systems Performance, Management and Design. Through initial engagement, with our industry partners IrrigationNZ, Muka Tangata has identified a requirement for shorter more flexible training and an opportunity to enhance potential pathways between these qualifications, while ensuring that they are fit-for-purpose for industry, ākongā and our hāpori (communities).</p> <p>Numbers for the current qualifications are low, with one qualification having zero enrolments since development making it pertinent to review the content, structure and credit value of all qualifications, standards and micro credentials collectively to ensure they are fit for purpose. NZ Irrigation have also indicated a strong preference to review the entire suite of qualifications.</p>
Calf Rearing Fundamentals (Micro-credential) (Level 3)			In development	<p>Muka Tangata was approached via Industry to review Agriculture qualifications, micro credentials, and standards to build flexible, sustainable, and enduring learning pathways for learners, employers, and agriculture industries.</p> <p>We know from our research with industry and vocational education partners that current qualifications are overly complicated, often too long, and do not</p>

				meet the needs of industry. Muka Tangata has a clear understanding of what an effective qualification structure should look like and will develop appropriate qualifications, micro-credentials, and skill standards for Agriculture through this project.
Advanced Calf Rearing (Micro-credential) (Level 3)			In development	<p>Muka Tangata was approached via Industry to review Agriculture qualifications, micro credentials, and standards to build flexible, sustainable, and enduring learning pathways for learners, employers, and agriculture industries.</p> <p>We know from our research with industry and vocational education partners that current qualifications are overly complicated, often too long, and do not meet the needs of industry. Muka Tangata has a clear understanding of what an effective qualification structure should look like and will develop appropriate qualifications, micro-credentials, and skill standards for Agriculture through this project.</p>
Apply agrichemicals using unmanned aerial vehicles (simulated application) (Micro-credential) (Level 4)			In development	<p>Muka Tangata has developed a new suite of micro-credentials for Agrichemical Application to evaluate its relevance and alignment with current industry standards and workforce needs. The engagement with Growsafe to align SS, MC and qualifications to the certificates Growsafe offer (Basic, Standard, Theory, Advanced and Registered Chemical Applicator), developing a plan with concept SS, MC and existing qualification for Growsafe to review and engage within their network. The review date for this qualification is significantly overdue as of August 2023.</p>

Functional cattle hoof trimming (Micro-credential) (Level 5)			In development	<p>Muka Tangata was approached via Industry to review Agriculture qualifications, micro credentials, and standards to build flexible, sustainable, and enduring learning pathways for learners, employers, and agriculture industries.</p> <p>We know from our research with industry and vocational education partners that current qualifications are overly complicated, often too long, and do not meet the needs of industry. Muka Tangata has a clear understanding of what an effective qualification structure should look like and will develop appropriate qualifications, micro-credentials, and skill standards for Agriculture through this project.</p>
Primary Industry Business Human Resource Management (Micro-credential) (Level 5)			In development	<p>Muka Tangata was approached via Industry to review Agriculture qualifications, micro credentials, and standards to build flexible, sustainable, and enduring learning pathways for learners, employers, and agriculture industries.</p> <p>We know from our research with industry and vocational education partners that current qualifications are overly complicated, often too long, and do not meet the needs of industry. Muka Tangata has a clear understanding of what an effective qualification structure should look like and will develop appropriate qualifications, micro-credentials, and skill standards for Agriculture through this project.</p>
Primary Industry Business Finance Fundamentals (Micro-credential) (Level 5)			In development	<p>Muka Tangata was approached via Industry to review Agriculture qualifications, micro credentials, and standards to build flexible, sustainable, and enduring learning pathways for</p>

				<p>learners, employers, and agriculture industries.</p> <p>We know from our research with industry and vocational education partners that current qualifications are overly complicated, often too long, and do not meet the needs of industry. Muka Tangata has a clear understanding of what an effective qualification structure should look like and will develop appropriate qualifications, micro-credentials, and skill standards for Agriculture through this project.</p>
Production Management Upskill [details TBC] (Micro-credential) (Level 4)			In development	<p>Muka Tangata was approached via Industry to review Agriculture qualifications, micro credentials, and standards to build flexible, sustainable, and enduring learning pathways for learners, employers, and agriculture industries.</p> <p>We know from our research with industry and vocational education partners that current qualifications are overly complicated, often too long, and do not meet the needs of industry. Muka Tangata has a clear understanding of what an effective qualification structure should look like and will develop appropriate qualifications, micro-credentials, and skill standards for Agriculture through this project.</p>
Care of working farm animals (TBC) - topic = working dogs and horses (Micro-credential) (Level 3)			In development	Technical Advisory Group engagement yet to commence work.
NZ Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing (Level 5)			In development	Engagement with industry. Public consultation closed 24 October 2025.
Manage wool preparation in a wool harvesting operation (Level 4)			In development	Engagement with industry. Public consultation closed 24 October 2025.
Horticulture qualifications review			Signalling for 2027	Horticulture qualifications are due for review this year, but this will be for the ISB to decide and progress. Industry have

				indicated they would like to see the existing qualifications broken down into bite-sized micro-credentials, with the intention to attract larger volumes of learners in shorter targeted training.
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SECTION C – Other information

Is there anything else you would like to advise TEC of in relation to investment in vocational education and training?



This section provides you with a space to record matters the template does not cover.

- Please ensure this advice is within TEC's role to action. It is important that advice is given to the correct government agency to be actioned. If you are unsure about this, refer to the guidance document.
- We recommend a maximum of 200 words for this section.
- If this section isn't relevant, leave it blank.

We've developed quite a lot of new qualifications that will be coming up. They are largely in micro-credential form, responding to what industry want. Industry has raised concerns about there being provision for those micro-credentials and available funding due to funding issues. We appreciate that TEC has acknowledged an awareness of this problem and are raising it again for the record.

The Food and Fibre sector has produced a [Food and Fibre Workforce Capability Strategy](#) which highlights a number of issues and possible ways forward.

Appendix A: Assessment of the full set of qualifications for each industry

This appendix provides our assessment of the full set of our qualifications for each industry, detailing each industry's situation, skills and workforce needs, and industry's prioritisation of qualifications. Note that there will be variances between what an individual industry has prioritised and our final advice in Section A, which takes a sector prioritisation.

Pan-sector

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Skills (Level 2): Optional strand in Self-Management and Employability Skills [2218]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills (Level 3): Optional strands in Specialist Equipment, and Infrastructure [2215]	Medium Priority
Emerging Leadership in People, Food and Fibre Industries (Micro-credential) (Level 4) [5044]	High Priority
New Zealand Diploma in Primary Industry Business Management (Level 5) [2221]	Medium priority

Fruit

[GDP](#) in the Fruit industry is forecast to increase almost 6% between 2023 and 2027.

MPI's forecasted growth for 2032 across horticulture shows an increase across all occupations (BAU scenario):

- 9% increase for managed workers, which for the Fruit industry include orchard workers, pickers, thinners and pruners, machine operator, and packing staff
- 29% increase for managers (which for the Fruit industry include orchard managers, operations managers, and technical managers)
- 21% increase for semi-autonomous workers (assistant managers, forepersons, thinning supervisors, and picking supervisor).

The Fruit industry workforce has a low level of formal qualifications. Based on those in the workforce where we have [data on qualifications](#), 13% have no qualification and 12% have NCEA L1 or equivalent. This is a higher level of people with low level or no qualifications compared with the benchmark across all Muka Tangata industries.

The focus is on raising the key skills sets and maintaining a pipeline of skilled workers through the qualifications at levels 3 and 4 and growing leadership through the pan-sector Emerging Leadership Micro-Credential.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (General) (Level 3) [2677]	Decrease
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3) [Stranded] [2678]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture Production (Level 4) [Stranded] [2676]	High priority
Assess and manage risks to freshwater from horticultural production (Micro-credential) (Level 4) [5055]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Diploma in Horticulture Production (Level 5) [Stranded] [2666]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 3) [2680]	
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 4) [2681]	
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 5) [2682]	

Vegetables

[GDP](#) in the Vegetables industry is forecast to increase more than 4% between 2023 and 2027.

MPI's forecasted growth for 2032 across horticulture shows an increase across all occupations (BAU scenario):

- 9% increase for managed workers which for the Vegetable industry include glass house workers and packhouse workers
- 29% increase for managers (production managers, operations managers, grower managers, and packhouse managers)
- 21% increase for semi-autonomous workers (supervisors, glasshouse managers, grading team leads, pre pack team leads, dispatch team leads, and quality controllers).

The Vegetables industry workforce has a low level of formal qualifications. Based on those in the workforce where we have [data on qualifications](#), 15% have no qualification and 11% have NCEA L1 or equivalent. This is a higher level of people with no qualifications compared with the benchmark across all Muka Tangata industries (NCEA Level 1 or equivalent is in line with the benchmark).

The focus is on raising the key skills sets and maintaining a pipeline of skilled workers through the qualifications at levels 3 and 4 and growing leadership through the pan-sector Emerging Leadership Micro-Credential.

Recent engagement with industry has highlighted several critical skill areas required across the sector, including foundational knowledge in plant physiology, biology, biodiversity, and regenerative practices. Training in digital technologies is also becoming more important with increasing automation and digitization of farming and packing operations.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (General) (Level 3) [2677]	Decrease
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3) [Stranded] [2678]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture Production (Level 4) [Stranded] [2676]	High priority
Assess and manage risks to freshwater from horticultural production (Micro-credential) (Level 4) [5055]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Diploma in Horticulture Production (Level 5) [Stranded] [2666]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 3) [2680]	
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 4) [2681]	
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 5) [2682]	

Grapes and Wine

NZ Wines reports that the industry has continued to invest in the future. New vineyards have been planted and, as we experience a rapidly changing environment, there is a focus on research and sustainability. The free trade agreement between New Zealand and the European Union has significantly improved access to the European market.

MPI's forecasted growth for 2032 across horticulture shows an increase across all occupations (BAU scenario):

- 9% increase for managed workers which for Grapes and Wine include production workers (distribution, viticulture/purchasing, logistics/bottling/transport, quality control, wine cellar, wine maker), winter pruning, and maintenance
- 29% increase for manager roles
- 21% increase by 2026 for semi-autonomous roles.

The focus is on strengthening the core skills from the level 3 and 4 qualifications – and especially the dedicated Complex Apprenticeship that was put into place two years ago.

Recent engagement with industry has highlighted that a need for biosecurity skills is front of mind.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (General) (Level 3) [2677]	Decrease
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3) [Stranded] [2678]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture Production (Level 4) [Stranded] [2676]	High priority
Assess and manage risks to freshwater from horticultural production (Micro-credential) (Level 4) [5055]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Diploma in Horticulture Production (Level 5) [Stranded] [2666]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Cellar Operations (Level 3) [2722]	
New Zealand Certificate in Cellar Operations (Level 4) [2723]	
New Zealand Certificate in Cellar Operations (Level 4): Optional strands in Vintage Operations, and Wine Analysis [4553]	
New Zealand Certificate in Cellar Operations (Level 5): Optional strands in Technical Operations, and Wine Analysis [4554]	
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 3) [2680]	
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 4) [2681]	
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 5) [2682]	

Nursery, Turf and Gardening

[GDP](#) across Nursery, Turf and Gardening is forecast to increase almost 16% between 2023 and 2027. Workforce forecasts for the industry sit within the wider Horticulture industries. MPI's forecasted growth for 2032 across horticulture shows an increase across all occupations (BAU scenario).

At the moment NZPPI are focused on looking at the broader Horticulture qualifications review and Nursery's input into that possible review, rather than prioritising existing qualifications.

Sports Turf has indicated that there is now learner demand for the level 5.

The arboriculture industry has noted an increase in health and safety costs, a need to support promotion of the industry and an increasing need for arborists in supporting all avenues of infrastructure and primary industries.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (General) (Level 3) [2677]	
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (Level 3) [Stranded] [2678]	
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture Production (Level 4) [Stranded] [2676]	
Assess and manage risks to freshwater from horticultural production (Micro-credential) (Level 4) [5055]	

New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture Services (Level 4): [Stranded] [2674]	
New Zealand Diploma in Horticulture Production (Level 5) [Stranded] [2666]	
New Zealand Certificate in Arboriculture (Level 5): Supervisory Operations, and Technical Operations [2670]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Diploma in Arboriculture (Level 6) [2669]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Sports Turf (Level 5) [2675]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Sports Turf (Level 6) [2683]	
New Zealand Diploma in Amenity Horticulture (Level 5) [4284]	
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 3) [2680]	
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 4) [2681]	
New Zealand Certificate in Organic Primary Production (Level 5) [2682]	

Apiculture

Although [GDP](#) is forecast to increase 10% between 2023 and 2027, the Apiculture industry has been through a significant and rapid growth period and has gone through a period of consolidation and increasing focus on professionalisation and commercial discipline.

The contraction within the industry was largely the result of an oversupply of honey, which along with increased cost pressures made it difficult for some beekeepers to keep their businesses profitable. The combination of these pressures led to some businesses downscaling hive numbers. However, there are signs of a soft industry recovery as beekeepers report improved honey sales heading into 2026, along with improved export sales.

In spite of the contraction there have been significant increases in training numbers for Apiculture related qualifications in recent years, despite declining workforce numbers. Training considerations should focus on practical on-job training, as current delivery blends hobbyists and future workforce together, despite the need for a different set of skills needs when training for a job in the industry. Industry have noted the Apprenticeship in Apiculture programme, which is made up of the Level 3 and Level 4, with learning done on the job.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 3) [2223]	
New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Level 4) [2224]	Low Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Apiculture (Queen Bee Rearing) (Level 4) [2225]	

Dairy

Forecasted growth for [GDP](#) in the dairy industry is 22% between 2023 and 2027.

Almost everyone in the dairy workforce starts out as a farm assistant. This suggests that training needs to be at a reasonably low level to capture people, and our advice last year prioritised level 3 and 4 qualifications over level 5. However, we understand that an increased need for contract milkers is creating more of a need for level 5 training.

The Level 2 sector-entry qualifications are also a priority because they support people to gain basic employability skills. New entrants to the workforce need to get these core qualifications when they start out in the industry. However, there are some pressing skills gaps around data analysis and leadership, which requires higher level 5 qualifications and credentials. If current training levels are only maintained, there will not be enough trained people to meet the skills demand from industry, and the gap will only get wider.

Many farm managers do not have formal training, and upskilling them is a priority for industry. The pan-sector Emerging Leadership Micro-Credential is a focus for the industry.

The industry is increasingly requesting shorter training options, such as micro-credentials with seasonal and regional considerations being a priority. This could be in the form of work-based or provider-based learning, but the bigger priority is that training is available across the regions where the workforce is based.

In our engagement with industry on our 2026 and 2027 advice, the following skill needs were identified: pasture management, reproduction and neonatal care, technology use, data analysis, business support, environmental considerations, animal welfare, milk quality, biosecurity, staff management and training skills. Biosecurity and health and safety are high risk areas due to migrants filling workforce gaps when they aren't trained.

Business skills were also identified as an industry priority, but industry noted that the changing of the funding rate for the Diploma in Primary Industries Business Management (Level 5) has resulted in providers no longer offering this programme.

Industry also noted the impact of the policy on visa-holders not being eligible for domestic fees. These workers are no longer accessing training which raises biosecurity and food safety risks and potentially affects productivity.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3) [3869]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Farming Systems) (Level 3) [2220]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Land Based Sustainability Practices (Level 3) [2684]	
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Level 4) [Stranded] [2212]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Sustainable Primary Production (Level 4) [2685]	
New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Production Management (Level 5) [Stranded] [2211]	Medium Priority

Sheep, Beef, Deer & Wool

MPI's forecasted growth for 2032 across "Red Meat and Wool" shows an overall workforce decrease of 1% (BAU scenario). However, this varies by occupation:

- 14% decrease for casual workers
- 3% increase for manager roles
- 2% decrease for semi-autonomous roles.

The Sheep, Beef, Deer and Wool industries (excluding Shearing Services) have the highest percentage (44% in 2022) of people in the workforce who are 55 years or older across all Muka Tangata industries. With such a large percentage of the workforce approaching retirement, it is essential that the next generation have the skills and training.

The Sheep, Beef, Deer and Wool industry workforce has a low level of formal qualifications. Based on those in the workforce where we have [data on qualifications](#), 14% have no qualification and 12% have NCEA L1 or equivalent. This is a higher level of people with low level or no qualifications compared with the benchmark across all Muka Tangata industries.

The Sheep and Beef sector would prefer work-based delivery models that support learners to gain hands-on experience and practical skills such as animal welfare and handling, land management, and machinery operation. Recent industry engagement has highlighted a specific interest from farmers in micro-credentials focused on practical skills such as chainsaw operation, fencing, and ATV use, with skills gaps identified in management and leadership training. Agri-tech skills are also becoming increasingly important.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3) [3869]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Farming Systems) (Level 3) [2220]	
New Zealand Certificate in Land Based Sustainability Practices (Level 3) [2684]	
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Level 4) [Stranded] [2212]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Sustainable Primary Production (Level 4) [2685]	
New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Production Management (Level 5) [Stranded] [2211]	

Wool related qualifications and credentials

Qualification or credential	Priority
Introduction to Shearing (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [5068]	High Priority
Shearing Essentials (Junior) (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [5066]	High Priority
Wool Handling Fundamentals (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [5067]	High Priority
Wool Pressing Skills (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [5065]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Woolshed Skills (Level 3): Wool Handling, and Wool Pressing [4112]	
New Zealand Certificate in Wool Harvesting (Level 3): Strong Wool Shearing, and Fine and Mid Micron Wool Shearing [4153]	
New Zealand Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing (Level 4) [4113]	High Priority

Arable

The Arable industry has a smaller workforce size, comprising largely of owner-operated family farms. Pathways into the industry are not always clear.

[GDP](#) is forecasted to increase by 18% between 2023 and 2027.

MPI's forecasted growth for 2032 across the Arable industry shows an overall workforce decrease (BAU scenario). However, this varies by role:

- 16% decrease by for managed roles
- 8% increase for manager roles
- 2% increase for semi-autonomous roles (eg experienced hands).

The Arable industry workforce has a low level of formal qualifications. Based on those in the workforce where we have [data on qualifications](#), 14% have no qualification and 12% have NCEA L1 or equivalent. This is a higher level of people with low level or no qualifications compared with the benchmark across all Muka Tangata industries.

Feedback from industry engagement has highlighted skills needs in succession planning, no-till farming, farming systems and mixed livestock, and precision irrigation and drones.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3) [3869]	
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Farming Systems) (Level 3) [2220]	
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Level 4) [Stranded] [2212]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Sustainable Primary Production (Level 4) [2685]	
New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Production Management (Level 5) [Stranded] [2211]	
New Zealand Certificate in Agriculture (Arable Production) (Level 3) [2624]	
New Zealand Certificate in Rural Contracting (Level 3): Crop Production, Harvesting, and Mechanical Vegetation Control [2728]	
New Zealand Certificate in Seed Processing and Handling (Level 3) [4496]	
New Zealand Certificate in Seed Processing and Handling (Level 4) [2468]	

Poultry, Pork and Other Livestock qualifications

[GDP](#) for the Pork, Poultry and other Livestock industry is forecasted to increase 12% between 2023 and 2027.

MPI's forecasted growth for 2032 across the "Pork, Poultry, Bees and Other Sector" shows an overall workforce increase (BAU scenario). However, this varies by occupation:

- 5% decrease for farm workers – production workers, packaging, stores, transport – and poultry workers
- 19% increase for manager roles – farm managers, general managers processing and packing, and production managers
- 11% increase for forepersons and other semi-autonomous roles.

The Poultry, Pork and other Livestock industry workforce has a low level of formal qualifications. Based on those in the workforce where we have [data on qualifications](#), 13% have no qualification and 11% have NCEA L1 or equivalent. This is a higher level of people with low level or no qualifications compared with the benchmark across all Muka Tangata industries.

Currently there is no progression pathway for the Poultry industry, with the only Poultry specific level training being at Level 2. The industry would like to see the Level 3 qualification delivered, but there is currently no programme developed against it. Biosecurity and health are front of mind for the Poultry industry as the threat of avian bird flu increases. Animal welfare and husbandry continue to be important skills needs for the Pork industry.

Qualification or credential	Priority
Introduction to the Poultry Industry (Micro-credential) (Level 2) [3991]	High Priority

New Zealand Certificate in Pork Production (Stockperson) (Level 3) [Stranded] [2525]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Poultry Production (Level 3): Poultry Egg Production, Poultry Hatchery, and Poultry Rearing [2932]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Poultry Management (Level 4): Poultry Egg Production, Poultry Hatchery, and Poultry Rearing [2933]	Low Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Pork Production (Management) (Level 4): Optional strand in Pig Farm Production Planning [4222]	High Priority

Equine, dogs and racing

In 2024, the New Zealand Racing industry reported generating close to \$1.9 billion in value-added contribution to the New Zealand economy, up from a reported \$1.6 billion in 2018. The Equine, dogs and racing industries have been through significant challenges as a result of recent (and ongoing) Government reviews calling for reforms. The move to a more tightly regulated industry and focus on both animal welfare and worker safety will require increased training and skills to meet these needs.

Training numbers will never be large, given the size of the workforce, but the industry has a need for highly skilled participants to meet its licensing and welfare standards.

The Equine, dogs and racing industry workforce has a low level of formal qualifications. Based on those in the workforce where we have data on [qualifications](#), 16% have no qualification and 13% have NCEA L1 or equivalent. This is the highest level of people with low level or no qualifications across all Muka Tangata industries. Learner enrolments numbers have been trending upward until more recently, as industry looks to raise the skills of this group to better meet its needs, especially as health and safety have been key issues, and to provide better career pathways to sustain industry.

The industry's priority is on new entrant skills (most of whom come with no formal qualifications) and the revised level 4 qualification that provides a career pathway.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Equine Skills (Level 2) [2375]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Assistant Trainer (Level 4) [4825]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Equine Breeding (Stud Groom) (Level 3) [2370]	
New Zealand Certificate in Equine Skills (Level 3): Harness Racing Stable Assistant, Thoroughbred Raceday Strapper, Thoroughbred Stable Assistant, Thoroughbred Racing Track Rider, and Sporthorse Stable Assistant [2376]	Medium Priority – changed based on industry feedback: to support the progression of those entering the industry from the greyhound sector.

New Zealand Certificate in Equine Racing (Level 4): Thoroughbred Racing Jockey, Harness Driver/Trainer, and Harness Racing Driver [2374]	To be replaced by 4221
New Zealand Certificate in Equine Skills (Sporthorse Groom) (Level 4) [2377]	
New Zealand Certificate in Equine Breeding (Senior Stud Groom) (Level 4) [2371]	
New Zealand Certificate in Equine Racing (Level 4): Thoroughbred Racing Jockey, Harness Trainer, and Harness Racing Driver [4221]	
New Zealand Diploma in Equine Management (Level 5): Broodmare Management, Yearling Management, Stallion Management, and Racing Stable Foreman [2380]	

Veterinary Services

[GDP](#) for Veterinary Services is expected to increase 16% between 2023 and 2027.

Workforce shortage remains a concern for industry, but there is particular concern about the shortage of skilled professionals. The skills needs for technical expertise and leadership are more in demand, and the industry needs more trained managers and supervisors with strong leadership skills to fill the gap.

Feedback on our 2026 and 2027 advice has highlighted that it is hard to determine training need numbers because there is high workforce turnover due to poor conditions and pay. Therefore, there is a more pressing need for training.

The focus is on the core Vet Nurse role and supporting Vet Techs.

Industry has identified skills needs in animal welfare and clinical skills, and feedback on our 2027 advice reaffirmed an industry need for more trained managers and supervisors with strong leadership skills. Industry has indicated that investment in leadership capability will directly support workforce sustainability and reduce turnover.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Animal Care (Level 3): Companion Animals, Equine, and Rural Animals [2487]	Decrease
New Zealand Certificate in Animal Healthcare Assisting (Level 4): Companion Animal Healthcare, Equine Healthcare, and Rural Animal Healthcare [4388]	High Priority
New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (level 6) [2491]	Replaced by 4389
New Zealand Diploma in Veterinary Nursing (level 6): Companion Animal Veterinary Nursing, and Equine Veterinary Nursing [4389]	High Priority
New Zealand Diploma in Animal Healthcare Technology (Level 6): Canine and Equine Rehabilitation Technology, and Equine Dental Technology [4390]	
New Zealand Diploma in Rural Animal Veterinary Technology (Level 6) [4391]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Animal Management (Level 4): Canine Behaviour and Training, Companion Animals, Fish, Amphibians and Reptiles, Pet Grooming, and Zookeeping [2489]	

Seafood

[GDP](#) for the Seafood industries is forecasted to decline by 14% between 2023 and 2027.

MPI's forecasted growth for 2032 across the Seafood industry shows an overall workforce increase (BAU scenario). However, this varies by occupation and role:

- 1% decrease for managed roles, including processing staff (deep sea), hatchery staff, and sea farm staff
- 27% increase for manager roles
- 17% increase for semi-autonomous roles.

The Aquaculture industry is forecast to increase significantly. Additionally, more specialist skills are becoming a necessity, particularly in the AI and technology space, which has seen an increase in use.

The Seafood industry workforce has a low level of formal qualifications. Based on those in the workforce where we have [data on qualifications](#), 14% have no qualification and 10% have NCEA L1 or equivalent. This is a higher percentage of workforce with no qualifications compared with the benchmark across all Muka Tangata industries.

The focus in the seafood industries is on the growing Aquaculture industry and the Micro-Credentials developed with industry to revitalise training in the sector.

Qualification or credential	Priority
Introduction to Aquaculture (Micro-credential) (Level 2) [5036]	High Priority
Introduction to Commercial Fishing (Micro-credential) (Level 2) [5052]	High Priority
Introduction to Seafood Processing (Micro-Credential) (Level 2) [5035]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Seafood Processing (Level 3): Fish and Fish Products, Live Holding, Cleaning and Sanitation, and Seafood Logistics [3130]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Aquaculture (Level 3): Hatchery, Fish, and Shellfish [3135]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Commercial Fishing (Level 3): Shellfish, Wet Fish, and Frozen Fish [3133]	Low Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Seafood Processing (Level 4) [3131]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Commercial Fishing (Level 4) [3132]	Low Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Aquaculture (Level 4): Hatchery, Fish, Shellfish, and Aquaculture Diving [3134]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Seafood (Level 5): Aquaculture, Seafood Processing, and Commercial Fishing [3129]	

Forestry

The Forestry production workforce as a whole is forecast to increase by at least 12% by 2032 (MPI BAU scenario). The trend is for increases in skilled roles:

- No increase for managed roles, such as nursery crew, silviculture manual, harvesting manual, and quality controller.
- 29% increase for forestry managers, nursery manager/owner, inventory crew manager, harvesting management, operations management, and forest roading engineer.
- 22% increase for skilled nursery crew, silviculture machine operators, mensuration technicians, machine operators, driver/machine operators, engineering machine operators/crew managers, harvesting machine operators/crew managers, infield management, dispatch managers, and roading machine operators.

The advice reflects the current state of the industry as it goes through a transition, where industry is looking to ensure that the workforce has the core skills needed, including increasing health and safety. Therefore, we have focussed on level 3 and 4 qualifications for the advice.

We anticipate a growing interest in adopting automation and mechanisation, and boosting forest management, as well as the uptake of the newly developed micro-credentials as things pick back up again. As a land-based industry in the regions, an increased level of importance is being shown by the industry to the role that whenua Māori and whānau, hapū and iwi play in forestry.

Qualification or credential	Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Industry Foundation Skills (Level 2) [4918]	Low Priority
Forestry Foundation Skills (Micro-credential) (Level 2) [5040]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Harvesting Operations (Level 3): Basic Machine Operation, Breaking Out - Cable, Landing Operations, and Tree Felling [2326]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Forestry Operations (Level 3): Basic Machine Operations, Mensuration, Production Thinning, Planting, Pruning, and Thin to Waste [2334]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Tree Felling and Clearing (Non-Production) (Level 3): Optional strand in Hazardous Tree Felling [2336]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Log Stock Management (Level 3) [4173]	No provision
Core Construction of Forestry Roads (Micro-Credential) (Level 3) [4980]	Medium Priority
Forestry Deadman Installation (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [4981]	Medium Priority
Forestry Earthworks Plant Operation (Micro-Credential) (Level 3) [4975]	Medium Priority
Forestry River Crossing Construction (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [4974]	Medium Priority
Forestry Road Pavement (Micro-Credential) (Level 3) [4973]	Medium Priority
Geotextile Installation in Forestry Infrastructure (micro-credential) (Level 3) [4982]	Medium Priority
Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Forestry Roads (Micro-Credential) (Level 3) [4976]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Harvesting Operations (Level 4): Cable Extraction, Ground Based Extraction, Mobile Cable Yarder, Head Breaker Out, Loading, Log Making, Mechanised Felling, Mechanised Processing, Spotting, Swing Yarder Extraction, and Tree Felling [2327]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Industry Operations (Planning and Monitoring) (Level 4): Harvesting, and Silviculture [2330]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Operations (Level 4): Mechanised Land Preparation, and Mechanised Thinning [4174]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Forest Harvesting Operations (Level 4) [4175]	High Priority
Forestry Operations: Log Scaling (Micro-credential) (Level 4) [4925]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Forestry Leadership (Level 5) [4826]	Medium Priority
Business Forestry Leadership (Micro-Credential) (Level 5) [4979]	High Priority
Core Forestry Leadership (Micro-Credential) (Level 5) [4977]	High Priority
Operational Forestry Leadership (Micro-Credential) (Level 5) [4978]	High Priority
New Zealand Diploma in Forest Management (Level 6) [2329]	High Priority (this has been changed due to industry raising it as a need)
Fell Non-pine Species Trees (Micro-Credential) (Level 4) [5278]	NEW
Machine-assisted Felling as a Machine Operator (Micro-Credential) (Level 4) [5279]	NEW

Machine-assisted Felling as a Tree Faller (Micro-Credential) (Level 4) [5277]	NEW
Manage a Worksite for a Tree Operation (Micro-Credential) (Level 4) [5280]	NEW
Plan and fell trees using advanced techniques in a tree felling operation (Micro-Credential) (Level 4) [5282]	NEW
Prepare for and Execute Machine-Assisted Felling of Small Trees as a Tree Faller (Micro-Credential) (Level 3) [5281]	NEW

Support Services

Support Services is a complex industry grouping of people in the workforce who support the outputs of the food and fibre sector and other wider sectors. This includes four ANZSIC class codes: Hunting and Trapping; Landscape and Construction Services; Other Agricultural Product Wholesaling; Other Agriculture and Fishing Support Services.

These various industries that sit within Support Services can overlap with multiple parts of the food and fibre sector, with the most common industries being Nursery, Turf and Gardening; Arable; Sheep, Beef and Deer; Fruit; and Vegetables.

The workforce has seen a slight decline since 2019, but has high levels of seasonal variation (which affect how forecasts should be treated). MPI data for Support Services is not available. We have done our own forecasting, which shows a 4.5% workforce increase between 2023 and 2027. [GDP](#) is forecast to increase almost 11% between 2023 and 2027.

The workforce has a low level of formal qualifications. Based on those in the workforce where we have [data on qualifications](#), 12% have no qualification and 11% have NCEA L1 or equivalent. This is in line with the benchmark across all Muka Tangata industries. The workforce has low new entrant retention rates and very low levels of industry tenure which drive a need for training of replacements.

The sector has very strong reliance on those on RSE, temporary & work visas making the industry vulnerable to changes in immigration trends and policy shifts. If current training levels are only maintained, there will not be enough trained people to meet the skills demand from industry, and the gap will only get wider.

Feedback on our 2026 and 2027 advice highlighted the following skills and occupation needs across Support Services:

- Pest Control: There is an increased need for workers as pest populations increase (for example, mice rising relative to rats and rising populations as a result of recent natural disasters and changing environments and climate). New skills may also be necessary as pest control methods change to meet new threats (for example, changing use of chemical controls and technology).
- Technical skills: As farming systems have diversified and become more complex, external technical expertise to assist producers has become more important.
- Agrichemical application: Industries across both horticulture and agriculture have identified the need for skills to apply agrichemicals safely. Industry has indicated that this is a growth area.
- Landscape Construction: The Landscape construction industry has a need for more autonomous and managerial skills. They have also identified a skills gap in 'soft scaping'.
- Irrigation: Learners are spread across the country which requires a range of training options to reach them - training needs to be flexible and include on-the-job delivery. A skilled workforce is required to design, install, operate and manage irrigation systems in New Zealand.

Qualification or credential	Priority
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New Zealand Certificate in Pest Operations (Level 3): Rural Pest Control, Rural Pest Monitoring, and Urban Pest Control [2443]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Pest Management (Level 4): Pest Animal, and Pest Plant [2444]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Rural Servicing (Level 4) [3520]	Medium Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Agrichemical Application (Level 4) with strands in Aquatic, Broadacre, Tree and Vine Horticultural, Targeted Weed Control, and Total Vegetation Control [3984]	Low Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Artificial Insemination of Livestock (Level 4) [2467]	
New Zealand Diploma in Landscape (Level 5) with strands in Construction, and Design [2888]	High Priority
New Zealand Diploma in Horticulture Production (Level 6): Process Improvement, and Product Development [2667]	Low Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Fencing (Level 4) [4356]	
New Zealand Certificate in Fencing (Level 5) [2700]	
New Zealand Certificate in Agrichemical Supply (Level 4) [2497]	
Irrigation - Full pipe water measurement device installation and commission (Micro-credential) (Level 5) [5004]	High Priority
Irrigation - Full pipe water measurement device verification (Micro-credential) (Level 5) [5002]	High Priority
Irrigation - Water measurement telemetry system installation and commission (Micro-credential) (Level 5) [5003]	High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Irrigation System Performance Assessment (Level 4) [2555]	
New Zealand Certificate in Irrigation System Management (Level 4) [2556]	
New Zealand Certificate in Irrigation System Design (Level 5) [2557]	
New Zealand Diploma in Field Hydrology (Level 5) [2344]	
New Zealand Certificate in Tuberculosis (TB) Testing of Livestock (Level 3): Cattle [2369]	
New Zealand Certificate in Fencing (Level 3): Rural strand, and Industrial strand [2699]	
New Zealand Certificate in Land Based Sustainability Practices (Level 3) [2684]	
New Zealand Certificate in Sustainable Primary Production (Level 4) [2685]	
Groundspread Nutrient Application for Primary Industry (Micro-credential) (Level 3) [4914]	