****

**Public Consultation on the**

**Proposed Workforce Development Councils Orders in Council**

**Submitters**: New Zealand Apples & Pears and Horticulture New Zealand Incorporated

**Submitted by**: Erin Simpson, Capability Development Manager, and Mike Chapman, Chief Executive

**Emails:** [Erin@applesandpears.nz](mailto:Erin@applesandpears.nz) and [mike.chapman@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:mike.chapman@hortnz.co.nz)

**Introduction**

The New Zealand Horticulture welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the Workforce Development Councils (WDC) Orders in Councils (OiC). In preparation for making this submission, we consulted with the horticulture industry’s growers and representative groups. Their views are accordingly incorporated into this document, which brings together their feedback. This submission is jointly made by New Zealand Apples & Pears and Horticulture New Zealand Incorporated, on behalf of the sector. This submission is also supported by the following organisations: XXX Potatoes New Zealand.

The horticulture industry is valued at $7 billion, employs than 60,000 people, grows fruit, berries and vegetables on 80,000 hectares of land and is an integral part of the regional economies in Northland, Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Hawke’s Bay, Gisborne, Manawatu, Marlborough, Nelson, Canterbury and Central Otago (Ministry of Primary Industries March 2020).

We are concerned that the implementation of the vocation educational reforms is taking some time. We note that there is much yet to be done to implement the reforms. Now more than ever before, as we grapple with the impact of Covid, we need to build a highly skilled workforce to enable continued production and growth. The health and economic viability of New Zealand is dependent on a viable and growing primary sector of which horticulture is a critical contributor.

One of the key principles of vocation education reforms was to put the learner, employer and the aspirations of industry at the forefront of future design and the provision of vocational education. We are concerned to note that this principle is being watered down as is evidenced in the WDC OiC.

The OiC has become too generic and leaves many important issues for the WDC to formulate themselves without adequate input from learners, employers and industry. These concerns are summarised as follows:

* The purpose of the WDC requires greater focus toward meeting the needs of the employer and therefore providing the learners with skills and abilities that will increase their marketability. Success should not measured in qualifications gained, but the extent to which employers value those qualifications, making the system demand and not supply led.
* The WDC should facilitate and coordinate existing industry voice on educational matters and should not try to supplant it. A unique aspect of or sector is the number of industry bodies able to provide that voice including the Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (COVE).  We must make sure these Organisations are complimentary and not in competition.
* The appointment process must consider industry representative balance in addition to the criteria listed.
* There must be a way for industry to hold the WDC and its governors accountable.
* The OiC must compel the WDC to work with industry to implement rules on critical process such as appointments and monitoring performance.
* Additional functions are recommended to:
  1. Compel the WDC to consider the wider education system in resolving workforce challenges
  2. Enable the WDC to do the right thing for industry, rather than constrain them through legislation.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this submission in more detail with Officials.

**Detailed Feedback:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Issues / Topic** | **Government’s Proposal** | **Hort Submission** |
| **Primary Industries WDC Coverage** | *pages 22 to 24 of the Consultation Proposal document* | Support |
| **Proposed legal name** | Muka Tangata People, Food and Fibre Workforce Development Council. | Support  We further submit that for consistency and clarity that the term “Food and Fibre Sector” replace the use of “primary industries” – the two terms are used in different places throughout the OiC |
| **Purpose statement**  **/ preamble** | This is a general statement that sets out the purpose of the WDC  Key purpose for horticulture is:  to work with learners, industry (including, without limitation, employers, employees, self-employed people, volunteers, industry associations and unions), tāngata whenua, stakeholders and the other Workforce Development Councils to give effect to the Council’s strategic direction  *page 10 of the Consultation Proposal document* | Support with the following additions to the WDC’s purpose:  To work collaboratively with industry bodies, employers and learners to:   1. Provide skills leadership to the vocational education sector so that education provision results in graduates with the knowledge, skills and abilities to meet the needs of current and future employers. 2. Develop and set standards, capstone assessments and qualifications 3. Endorse programmes to ensure they will meet graduate outcomes 4. Moderate assessments monitor quality of educational outcomes and ensure they meet employer needs. 5. To provide advice to TEC and government 6. To facilitate and channel the industry voice. (We submit the WDC is not a voice for or of industry.)   The current proposal is silent on the industry leadership, one of the key drivers of the reform. This must be addressed. |
| **Accountability, Strategic Direction, Annual Report** | Standard accountability provisions are proposed including:  advocate for, and contribute to, policies that meet the needs of industries covered by the Council, particularly as they relate to vocational education, career promotion and planning and the funding of education and training.  *page 11 of the Consultation Proposal document* | Support but amend this section to provide mechanisms for accountability to industry  We submit that this section should be expanded to include:   * A requirement to consult with industry organisations * A requirement to present an annual report, strategic plan and work plan to stakeholders including industry organisations * A requirement that the WDC develop performance measurement and accountability framework ***with*** industry and report on the achievement of these measures and the framework in the WDC’s annual reports. |
| **Council Membership** | 8 to 12 members including at least 2 Maori, 1 Trade Union, 1 Employer Associations and an even balance between Maori and non-Maori members  *page 12 of the Consultation Proposal document* | Submit that the WDC should reflect the makeup of the industries covered by the Primary Industries WDC, to honour te Tiriti o Waitangi and the importance of minority cultures and ethnicities being serviced  Also submit as drafted this section is confusing as to Maori representation and that this should be clarified  Industry bodies are currently excluded from making nominations. We submit that the references to who can nominate both employer and employee members should be removed, with the nomination process left open to any person, body, association or union in one of the specified industries. |
| **Appointments** | Minister appoints  *page 12 of the Consultation Proposal document* | Support but submit that the appointments are made on the recommendation of the industry groups through a nominations committee using a skills and representation matrix to inform appointments decisions by the Minister |
| **Appointment of the First Council** | To be done by a nomination committee established by the TEC CE  *page 13 of the Consultation Proposal document* | Submit that the nomination committee be appointed by the Minister, not TEC CE, on the recommendation of the SEG (Primary Industry Group) |
| **Governance Arrangements** | Good arrangements are proposed  *from page 14 of the Consultation Proposal document* | Support but submit that:  The tenure of Council members should be three not six years; and there needs to be an accountability mechanism inserted into the OiC |
| **Mechanisms for Industry Engagement** | WDC must engage with industry peak bodies and unions  WDC may establish industry stakeholder groups  *page 21 of the Consultation Proposal document* | Support and submit that an industry peak body be defined as (1) a body that is levy funded under the Commodities Levies Act OR (2) a body accepted by the Council a peak body e.g. Federated Farmers  Also we submit and stress the absolute need for these groups to ensure that all sectors have contact with the WDC to ensure that mechanisms such as advisory groups are available to fill short or long- term knowledge and perspective gaps in the actual council |
| **Additional functions** | * to promote opportunities for all people to reach their full potential and capabilities by supporting quality vocational educational outcomes; and * to address the needs and aspirations of priority learners including Pacific learners and people with disabilities.   *page 21 of the Consultation Proposal document* | Support but to ensure that the structures that have hampered the ITOs the following functions be added to this section:   * The WDC will consider how the entire skills ecosystem must be mobilised to build the capability we require in our future workforce. In addition to the vocational education sector, the WDC will provide advice to compulsory education, higher education, industry extension and professional development providers. * The WDC may undertake commercial work on behalf of industry where it is aligned to the overall objectives and functions of WDC. |
| **Funding of Vocation Education** | No proposal in the Consultation Documents | Submit that the WDC should determine the funding arrangements as was proposed in the original Reform of Vocational Education consultation documents |