

LABOUR MARKET WORKSHOP – KEY FINDINGS

CHRISTCHURCH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs)

May/June 2016

PURPOSE

Canterbury Development Corporation is undertaking a review of the Christchurch Economic Development Strategy, 2013.

The CEDs Labour Market workshop was one of four thematic workshops¹, the others are as follows:

- CEDs Innovation workshop
- CEDs Attractive City workshop
- CEDs Business Environment workshop

The purpose of the CEDs Labour Market workshop was to consider what we need to do to ensure Christchurch has the workforce it needs now and into the future. The workshop involved representatives of Christchurch's business community, local government, tertiary institutions and other stakeholders.

This document presents the key findings from the discussion. It may be useful to read this along-side the workshop brief¹, which provided context for the discussion. The summary points from the workshop brief are included in Appendix 1.

NEXT STEPS IN THE REVIEW OF CEDs

During June and July 2016, CDC will use the workshop findings and other research to review the CEDs strategic framework and identify potential initiatives with delivery partners. This will be circulated to all workshop participants.

During July and August 2016, CDC will draft the revised strategy.

The strategy will be presented to the Christchurch City Council in late 2016 for endorsement.

¹ All the workshop key findings papers and the workshop briefs can be found at the [web page](#).

KEY WORKSHOP FINDINGS

TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE REBUILD

There is no need to panic:

- The contraction of the rebuild workforce will take time.
- Christchurch's labour market responded well to the rebuild. The labour market has sufficient elasticity to respond.
- People will move away for other work.

It would be useful to understand better:

- The anticipated demand for and relevance of rebuild labour and skills – demand for workers from other sectors in Christchurch; what skills are required; what skills are available.
- For international migrants – desire to stay in Christchurch, whether visas limit skills transferability.

Other sectors (e.g. tourism, agriculture) won't provide rebuild workers with the higher wage/conditions they have had during the rebuild.

Reskilling may be required – both post rebuild and moving from residential to commercial focused rebuild.

Solutions

Dial back migration focus in the short-term.

Focus on:

- Retaining local workers / population (or local and migrants?)
- Developing an attractive city / living proposition

Help construction related businesses that have expanded during the rebuild to diversify into other markets outside of Christchurch.

Grow high-value jobs in other sectors:

- Significant tourism growth may be an opportunity for new career or business opportunities
- Businesses offering high-value jobs

MEETING LONG-TERM CHALLENGES (WORKFORCE GAP, SKILLS REQUIREMENTS)

Building on the working age population gap research by CDC for Christchurch and Canterbury, it would be useful to understand better and communicate more proactively to Ministers and other agencies:

- The future types of jobs required
- Skills required – including those which enable employees to be agile
- How to retain high labour force participation (i.e. what factors drove the increased rate in recent years)

Need more flexible way to recognise capability – not just qualifications. Value soft skills. e.g. skills matrix.

Are there ways for SMEs to share knowledge / human resources to overcome scale challenges?

Solutions

Wider use of flexible working.

Utilise older people as a resource to develop skills and knowledge in younger people.

Opportunity for better industry / education engagement:

- Alignment of education with economic opportunities
- Recognise importance of innovation
- Provide better information for students about career opportunities and pathways
- Build on great industry networks and industry-tertiary partnership already in the city – Christchurch has a particular advantage in this?

Ensure the immigration criteria remains relevant and adaptable to future demands.

Communicate city offering – opportunities to students, returnees, migrants:

- Link education and job opportunities better
- Family friendly city
- Domestic job fair

Provide better information and pathways to local employment for International students.

Grow high-value jobs.

Barriers to some people gaining employment / skills include transport and need to balance work with supporting family.

APPENDIX 1 – LABOUR MARKET WORKSHOP BRIEF SUMMARY

- The labour market pressures of the rebuild have not impacted the rest of the economy as significantly as initially thought.
- Transitioning labour from the rebuild will be challenging – over 30,000 workers transitioning out of the construction-related employment by 2020.
- Labour market factors affecting the growth of Christchurch businesses and sectors include:
 - An ageing population
 - Increasing global competition for skilled labour from cities and businesses
 - Rapidly changing technology increasing the skills requirements across sectors
 - Responding to the changing nature of work and expectations of workers
- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often lack the skills and resources to invest sufficiently into human capital development and retention.
- The nature of learning is changing..