



Position Paper: **Deal with our skill shortage by developing pathways to attract diverse talent**

Problem

We know that digital leaders in Aotearoa are concerned about their access to talent, the skills gap, staffing churn, and attracting more talent to support IT project demand and/or growth. In fact they consider it as one of the biggest challenges facing their organisation in 2023.

Although the 'tap' of offshore labour has been turned back on, the number of returning Kiwis and skilled migrants is not as high as anticipated. Additionally, despite large tech layoffs in the industry across the globe we have yet to see this turn into an opportunity for the New Zealand tech industry.

When combined with our low numbers of New Zealanders studying tech we are scrambling for people with digital skills. It is well documented that we continue to see low rates of representation of Māori and Pasifika in our digital workforce.

While there are a number of initiatives including the Technology Industry Transformation Plan (the ITP) to grow our local talent in the pipeline or underway, we are yet to see the benefits and more must be done to support the right institutions and to encourage people into study and careers in the sector.



Position

Develop a comprehensive and holistic approach that combines talent attraction from offshore, education and skill development in Aotearoa, industry collaboration, and targeted support for specific areas of the tech sector.

Simplify and expedite visa application processes for skilled migrants in the digital, tech and telecommunications sectors. This could build on the border class exemption granted in 2022.

Government support for collaborating with the private sector to identify specific skill shortages and proactively work together to recruit talent from overseas.

Education settings to support tertiary institutions to encourage more people into tech careers and ensuring courses are up-to-date and industry-relevant courses, with a focus on emerging technologies and digital skills.

Work to develop closer ties between tertiary institutions and industry partners, encouraging internships, digital apprenticeships, work placements, and collaborative research projects.

Support and develop programmes to encourage more Māori, Pasifika and Wahine into tech such as the TEC's Inspiring the Future as well as improve access to career guidance and counselling services in schools that highlight the diverse pathways and opportunities available in the digital and tech sectors.

Recommendations

- Simplify and expedite visa application processes for skilled migrants in all tech and supporting sector roles.
- Work to support and develop programmes that encourage more Māori, Pasifika and Wahine into tech education and roles.
- Develop with industry and education institutions internships and digital apprenticeships schemes.