

### A Skills Strategy for New Zealand

The Skill New Zealand Forum - a forum which brings together government, business, unions and industry skills bodies to tackle the skills issues New Zealand faces - has released a discussion document on a skills strategy for New Zealand.

This discussion document identifies the importance to New Zealand of addressing not only how we develop the skills of our workforce, but how we make best use of those skills in our industries and workplaces.

New Zealand faces significant skills shortages in almost all industry sectors, at a range of skill levels - from essential workplace literacy and numeracy capability, through to managerial and supervisory capabilities.

We also face the challenge of lifting the productivity of our firms and our work, so that our firms are more profitable, our wages and salaries can be lifted and we can afford the social services we expect.

The discussion document on a New Zealand Skills Strategy sets out four goals in the area of skills for New Zealand:

- retaining and making better use of our people's skills
- lifting our demand for higher level skills
- improving our ability to supply those skills
- ensuring we all have a better understanding of how skills are gained, retained and best put to use

The discussion document identifies four priority areas for action:

- increasing the literacy, language and numeracy skills of the workforce
- building the capability of firms to make best use of skills
- ensuring firms and industries can access the kinds of skills they need
- increasing the skills of young people in the workforce

### A partnership approach

The draft Skills Strategy has been developed in partnership between Business NZ, the NZCTU, the Industry Training Federation and government. This recognises that effectively tackling skills issues is not something can be done by training providers or government alone - it requires a partnership approach.

In fact, the most important issues highlighted by the Skills Strategy are how firms and workers use their skills effectively - and what firms, government and industry groups have to do to make that possible.

The Skill New Zealand Forum partners will be engaging in public discussion about the issues raised in the discussion document over the next month, so that New Zealand can begin to address these critical issues.

For more information on the New Zealand Skills Strategy, including a list of the public discussion session, see <http://www.skillsstrategy.govt.nz>.