

Proposed Work Programme for the Tripartite Future of Work Forum

Just Transitions

New Zealand is facing a significant period of change as it transitions to a low emissions economy and responds to other key drivers of change, including new technologies, globalisation and demographic shifts that will impact the future of work. The government's key objectives in this area are:

- to understand the pathways to transform our economy in order to take collective action to find a way forward;
- understand how impacts of transition are distributed across the economy and making choices about how we manage these in an equitable and inclusive way; and
- partner with Maori/iwi, government, business, communities and the workforce to identify, create and support new opportunities, new jobs, new skills and new investments.

Within this wider agenda, the following areas are proposed for the Forum's work programme over the short, medium and longer-term.

Short term

Assist government to develop a prioritisation framework for engagement

Identifying the key stakeholders to engage with on a just transition, to be informed by an assessment of the likely future impacts; the scale of the opportunity for change; and the need to government to play a role to release these opportunities.

Assist to establish effective governance across government, with social partners and sectoral and regional groupings

Just Transitions have at their core a strong partnership with social partners. The work programme is founded in a collaborative operating environment with Business NZ, CTU and E tu as key partners. This model will be replicated at a regional level e.g. in Taranaki.

Short-medium term

Review and feedback on the Adapting to Climate Change in New Zealand Report

This report is the first report prepared by the Climate Change Adaptation Technical Working Group. It summarises the expected impacts of climate change on New Zealand over the medium and long term, takes stock of existing work on adaptation, and identifies gaps in New Zealand's current approach.

Build the understanding of policy levers and their relative priority

Articulating the variety of policy levers that government can bring to manage an effective transition, for example the role of the education system, social support services, innovation and science policy. Ensuring a just transition perspective is brought to bear on future policy decisions.

Short-medium-long term

Advise on the Engagement with Taranaki

Embedding a partnership approach with local government, businesses and iwi to develop a just transition plan for this region. Using a co-creation process to identify how the region can effectively transition to a low emissions economy and ensure that local businesses and residents are able to participate meaningfully and productively in this evolving regional economy.

Learning for Life

The rate of technological and economic change is accelerating. People need to continually value and engage in learning – formal and informal – to be able to adapt to, and leverage, these changes. The Government's objective is to make learning for life a reality by:

- ensuring the workforce has the foundational skills needed to support adaptability and resilience;
- enabling effective transitions from school to work, and ensuring the skills system is responsive to the labour market; and
- assisting people with changes in skills required over time.

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Short term

Assess and input into the Review of Vocational Education and Training

This is focussed on ensuring New Zealand has a skills system that is adaptive and supports the changing world of work. While no decisions have been made yet, the review is considering how to promote outcomes such as:

- improving regional provision of skills training,
- improving career pathways, including for people already in work who may need retraining or upskilling

identifying opportunities for improved relationships between different stakeholders in the sector.

Short-medium term

Review and advise on the Careers Action Plan

Developing and implementing a set of actions to improve the quality and effectiveness of school-based careers systems, with links to the new TEC Career Systems Strategy. The goal is better information and clearer pathways for an adaptable workforce.

Skills Shift in Manufacturing Initiative (created and led by the NZ Manufacturers Network)

The Manufacturers Network is proposing to partner with tertiary education and training providers, Competenz, trade union, manufacturers and relevant technology vendors. The initiative will aim to upskill workers in the manufacturing sector so NZ can better leverage the changes brought about by the digitalisation of products and processes.

Medium-long term

Careers System Strategy

Developing NZ's career system strategy to determine the future role Government will take in the careers system. This will include the key role we will play in ensuring that our country's careers service is aligned and linked to meet the needs of New Zealanders now and into the future.

Technology

Technology plays a crucial role in the context of the future of work. Widespread connectivity, increased automation and the impact of emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), will rapidly change the nature of work in New Zealand. The government's technology objectives are to:

- increase digital inclusion and connectivity;
- maximise the potential of the tech sector;
- build the digital capability of SME/non-tech businesses; and
- assist people and business to adapt to disruption.

Within this wider agenda, the following areas are proposed for the Forum's work programme over the short, medium and longer-term.

Short term

Advising on implementation of the Digital Skills for a Digital Nation report

Discussing with the Forum the ways to give effect to the recommendations in the Digital Skills for a Digital Nation report to minimise any negative impacts of automation and technological disruption and address the skills shortage in the tech sector.

Assist the Productivity Commission with its inquiry into the adoption and impact of technology

The PC has started to scope an inquiry on the scale and potential impacts of rapid technological change and its disruptive impact on the future of work and the workforce in New Zealand. The Forum could discuss inquiry progress (and challenges) regularly with the PC.

Short-medium term

Advising the yet-to-be appointed Chief Technology Officer

The Forum on the CTO-led digital strategy as it progresses to ensure that future of work issues take appropriate prominence – once appointed, the CTO could attend a future meeting to gather input.

Short-medium-long term

Exploring the potential applications of emerging technologies and their impacts on the workforce, and on productivity.

One example could be early engagement with the AI Forum on the relevant findings in its recent report, *Artificial Intelligence: Shaping a Future New Zealand*

Workplace Productivity

Productivity is the key driver of long-term per capita income growth. For this Forum, priority will be given to labour market productivity initiatives. The government's key objectives for workplace productivity are:

- Create workplaces – and workers – that are more adaptable and resilient to the pace of change as the economy transitions.
- Ensure the education and immigration systems are responsive to labour market trends,
- Create new ways for government, firms and unions work together to support workers to gain new skills.

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Short term

High Performance, High Engagement

High Performance High Engagement is a particular approach to resolving workplace issues. It is based on the concept that employers and employees are best placed to find solutions to work-related challenges and should therefore work together in decision-making.

The Government is considering how it can best support employers and unions to implement High Performance, High Engagement systems in their workplaces.

Short-medium-long term

Review and advise on the Productivity Commission work

The Forum's focus on productivity – labour market productivity in particular – aligns well with the work and expertise of the PC. Regular discussion between Forum members and the PC will improve the knowledge and analysis of both groups.

Medium-long term

Research, Science and Innovation Strategy

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment is in the early stages of scoping a framework for how Research, Science and Innovation will support the Government's goal to increase R&D expenditure to 2% of GDP over the next ten years. This will inform the development of a strategy. Minister Woods will present this framework to cabinet in the near future. This will provide a basis for public consultation on the development of a strategy.