



## Strategic Training Plan – Needs Statements



# Workforce:

## 1- All

**‘Industry sectors need to provide relevant data and input in order for ESITO to produce an accurate “skills forecast report”. This report should also identify current skills gaps’.**

Statistics from the Hyland Macqueen research on Skills Forecasting in the Electricity Supply Industry (ESI) over the next 10 years were presented at consultation. These statistics showed the Existing Workforce - Cumulative number of positions by skill and sector currently and the Cumulative number of positions by skill and sector required over the next 10 years. based on an assumption of 12,000 being the total workforce in the ESI. [The researchers make the comment in the report that getting a better estimate of the actual numbers in the ESI is key to improving the forecasts in the future]. It excludes generation and transmission construction workers as construction skills (e.g. concrete laying, erection, cable running etc) are not specific to the ESI. Retail is included under generation in the administration category. The splits between sectors (distribution;transmission;generation) and skill are based on a pro-rata split of the 12,000 total using a combination of the 2006 census data skill splits and industry survey data collected previously [by Dr. Koslow].

When asked if current workforce skill numbers look correct to each sector all sectors agreed that current administration and technician levels looked too high. There was some discussion amongst Distribution around the different terms used – electrical fitter not electrician and what IT encompassed. With the exception that Cable jointer numbers looking too low Distribution did agree, that the other figures looked correct. Transmission said the numbers currently employed as Linemen looked too low.

It was also noted that the research was done pre recession and it is hard to know what skills have been lost due to lay-offs and redundancies. Some companies mentioned that they were currently understaffed.

When asked if the future workforce skills needs look sensible to each sector it was repeated throughout consultations by all sectors that the expected number of technicians were too low. Transmission thought electrical fitters looked too low in one geographical area ESITO held a consultation and too high in another area. There was some discussion that without knowing what works are planned by the Network companies it is harder to assess what skills will be needed and the “re-stocking” of the workers lost during the recession will have an effect also.

**Do you see the skills gap about in balance at the moment?**

**Distribution.** There were a reasonable proportion of respondents who did not identify a skills gap at this time – however a greater number of respondents did see a skills gap specifically with regards to technicians, supervisors and faultman. It was also noted that there is an age gap (mid 30's) as well as a skills gap and that age did not necessarily mean skill.

**Transmission and Generation** agreed that there were gaps and identified technicians and experienced fitters as their area of need. Those who did not identify a skills gap at the moment also noted that there were *not* enough people in training, this would suggest that they did see a need for more trained people in the industry but are not terming this as a “skills gap”

## 2. - All

**‘Retirement attrition will have an effect on the ESI after 2020. The ESI needs more people in training now to ensure a competent workforce in the future. We need to attract the right people into our Industry’**

### **Are there the right numbers of trainees in training?**

It takes 4 -15 years to train competent people. Retirement is due to have an impact on the industry within the next 10 years as a large percentage of the industry, for all sectors, sits in the 45 to 55 year old age bracket. To replace these workers training needs to begin now.

A large portion of the companies present at consultations **did not** agree that there were enough numbers in training for Industry needs.

**Distribution.** One third of the respondents thought there were enough people in training for *their current company size*, however they see that retirement attrition will have an impact. Just over one third of respondents thought there wasn't enough in training.

**Transmission** didn't reach consensus to this question. Some respondents thought they had the right amount in training, other companies were aware that they didn't have enough in training but their current workload was too low to bring on any more. There were also reported impacts from contract changes.

**Generation** believe they have either the right numbers in training or they aware that they need new trainees - circumstances are not allowing them to bring more on (economy, no one to train them).

# Qualifications/Education Levels

## 3. - Transmission

**'Clearer communication is required regarding the alignment of the qualifications to Transpower specifications'**

## 4. – All

**'ESITO needs to engage with Industry to better understand the constraints of the qualifications system and to communicate the mechanisms in place to address a number of these constraints and drive completions'**

**The ESITO Employer Survey tells us that you're more likely to invest in training that improves efficiency or to meet customer specifications. Do ESITO qualifications deliver these outcomes?**

**Transmission** was in agreement that our qualifications **did not** deliver these outcomes and are training specifically to Transpower competencies using Omaka. It was said that ESITO qualifications are not producing competent staff and the training isn't as in-depth.

ESITO's response was that they have spent two years aligning the qualifications to the Transpower Service Specification training delivered by OMAKA. It appears that this is not being communicated.

There is an issue here with, Transmission sector not being aware that ESITO qualifications are aligned to the Transpower Service Specifications.

**Generation** didn't answer this question specifically – they expressed frustration over the supervisory course, availability and cancelled courses relating to this. The pre-requisite and compulsory units are also causing frustration as is the domestic electrical experience needed for registration.

The respondents highlighted the inconsistency between trainers as a primary concern.

**Distribution** were aware that the Line Mechanic Level 4 qualification is now aligned with registration and the completion of the qualification is accepted as evidence for registration by the EWRB. The change came in response to a mismatch between the training considered sufficient for attainment of registration and the unit standard requirements for completion of the qualification. A comparative of Electrical Workers Registration Board (EWRB) statistics and ESITO completions

over the past three years shows that in 2008 there were nearly 50% more Line Mechanic registrations than there were Level 4 Line Mechanic qualifications completed, data which reflected an increasing trend over the same period.

The reasons given for the higher number of registrations than completed qualifications included:

- If the trainee had missed being assessed on certain unit standards but was nevertheless deemed competent by their employer, they were able to apply for registration.
- lack of incentive for staff to gain the remaining unit standards once registration was gained

## Coverage

When asked about coverage **ALL** distribution responses were neutral. Some respondents said that they were “comfortable” or said coverage was “pretty good” in their first sentence but all had another point to add that suggested they weren’t satisfied. Transmission was evenly split. Half the respondents thought that there was good coverage,

The dissatisfaction for those that didn’t agree coverage was good stems from either - competency issues or our qualifications being too rigid and inflexible. It was said that the qualification path only worked for school leavers starting at the bottom and wanting to work up. There is no entry point for those changing qualifications (ex electricians for example) or those wanting to work on non livened equipment (in workshops painting/maintaining transformers). The prerequisite for some unit standards and the undertaking of an entire qualification vs. a module of core competencies was also an issue.

# Regional Provision and Assessment

## 5. - All

**ESITO needs to offer more flexible and innovative delivery options and allow more qualifications to be trained and assessed on the job.**

## 6.- Distribution

**ESITO needs to facilitate an agreed ‘terms of acceptance’<sup>1</sup> for a trainee to attend a block course.**

Excluding Auckland, all sectors had some degree of inconvenience accessing training **IN** their region. This varied regionally and dependant on need e.g. a Christchurch based engineer had no issue accessing engineering training, where as a Huntly based mechanical trainee would need to go to WelTech.

The cost of travel, accommodation and downtime needed to be factored in to any decision to train and the smaller or geographically isolated companies felt this more. Courses in peak times and the frequency with which courses are being cancelled also created issues for companies.

There was agreement for the need to increase on-job training and assessment packages. This would allow for more network/company specific training and create competent well rounded staff. It was also noted that industry needs to be more aware that the Training providers such as Utilitech are there to assess not train, and the trainees need to be ready for assessment. Some companies are sending trainees without enough knowledge and experience to be ready for assessment. More courses in off peak times and a published list of course dates at the beginning of each year would prove advantageous.

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<sup>1</sup> Document outlining the requirements of the provider, trainer and trainee in order for the trainee to attend a block course.

**What part can different methods of training delivery play in addressing regional access to training?**

Distribution Answered that distance learning<sup>2</sup> isn't always working especially for the lower levels (under level4) but this is all that is available in some areas, night classes were offered as a possible suggestion or best practice days where you pull all your trainees together and run through as much as you can, an example of this is one company had some downtime and were able to pull the trainees in to erect poles.

Most of transmission is faced with distance learning, this was not viewed as ideal. It was hard to keep the trainees on track without classroom environment. It was said that online courses may work in some cases and one company in Transmission is also doing training days when time allows.

Generation had one response; this was a call for more technology based/online training.

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<sup>2</sup> ESITO assumes that Distance learning refers to the ESITO e-TARS and TARS

# Demographics

## 7.- All

**'ESITO could promote succession plan models for use by Industry'**

## 8.- All

**'ESITO should develop and provide a 'tool box' to address generational dynamics in the workplace'**

### Age

There was some difference company to company but as a whole industry agreed that the age statistics for their sector look correct. With 40% of the ESI over 45 years old the respondents from all sectors agreed that that "age" and retirement demand will have a detrimental impact on their organisations in the next 10 to 15 years. Many of the companies had made plans to reduce this and succession planning included training new workers, actively recruiting a younger workforce and putting plans in place to ensure existing knowledge is passed on.

There are generational issues from a training perspective within most of the organisations we consulted. The respondents were struggling with bringing in a young workforce that didn't have the same values and ethics as their older workers did, because of this communication issues and resentment had arisen. There was the added problem that some of the older workers thought they were training up their replacements and they were reluctant to pass on their information.

As well as the issues or perceived issues from a training perspective the other side of this is that there are a group of 30 to 35s that are well trained "on to it" workers who are now in charge of an older gang they are also experiencing generational issues relating to their older co-workers. One of the respondents identified a lack of respect both ways between the older and younger workers. One respondent identified a generational issue with the older supervisors. He was finding it difficult if the older workers were unwilling or not capable of training to supervise and at the same time had issues with a younger worker being in charge. Those that were not experiencing generational supervision issues had a set of supervisors in the 60+ bracket that had the respect of their co-workers.

## 9.- All

**‘ESITO needs to promote case studies from the Responsiveness research regarding initiatives that support females, Māori and Pacific Peoples in training’**

### Gender

**Does your organisation have any current initiatives in place to drive increased participation in training or recruitment of females? If so what does this look like?**

All sectors said no

**Should ESITO look at targeted initiatives for female trainees in the ESI or specifically the Retail Sector?**

**Distribution.** Two respondents thought that ESITO should look at targeted initiatives for females in the industry. All the other respondents didn't think ESITO should, the exceptions to this were if trainees couldn't be found within the current pool then perhaps we could target females, one respondent thought that specifically targeting females would be discriminatory.

**Transmission.** One respondent thought we should be recruiting more females as it brings diversity.

**Generation.** None of the respondents thought that ESITO should be targeting females specifically. Three respondents did comment separately that a) 'it would be wrong to pigeon hole all females into retail'; b) one company takes a female out to tradeshows when recruiting; and c) 'there is a lot of diversity in the generation sector and opportunities for people not of a physical nature'.

### Ethnicity

**Does your organisation have initiatives in place to increase participation for Māori and Pacific Peoples into training or employment? If so what do these look like?**

**Distribution.** There are no formal initiatives in place across the board to increase Māori or Pacific Peoples into training or employment; however some actions are being taken by individual managers rather than at a company level. For example one company has a local Kaumātua actively recruiting and this is having a positive impact on recruiting Māori. Another company because of the makeup

of their workforce actively recruits Māori as there is a better team fit and often a family connection means the younger worker is more committed and the knowledge transfer seems to work well. It was identified by one of the companies that have pre-selection days that Māori may be disadvantaged by these due to literacy testing. Of those that didn't have any initiatives in place the respondents were positive.

**Transmission.** One respondent said “yes, basically if you don't know one of the bros you don't get in” this respondent was based in an area with a high Māori population, the rest of the respondents said no.

**Generation.** All except one respondent said that they didn't have initiatives in place to increase Māori or Pacific Peoples participation. The other respondent said that they did have links in place and were actively recruiting Māori

### **Does your organisation have specific support programmes for these demographics? If so what do these look like?**

**Distribution.** The majority of respondents didn't have support systems in place. Those who had encountered issues had met this with support e.g. English lessons for Samoan workers to pass their unit standards (the respondent was unable to identify if these were skilled immigrants or Samoan New Zealanders.) One company who didn't have specific company support in place thought that support systems were naturally occurring just given the makeup of his workforce and local demographics. Two respondents thought that it would be a good idea to have something and had made a start.

**Transmission.** Respondents didn't have any formal support in place, one respondent thought that because of the number of Māori staff that he did have, informal support was in place but not at a company level.

**Generation.** None of the Generation respondents had formal support in place.

### **Should ESITO look at dedicated support structures specific to this demographic to increase completions?**

This was evenly split, of those who didn't think there should be dedicated support structures only two added a comment, one thought that support should be in place for New Zealanders not immigrants but not specifically Māori. The other respondent said that if Māori were over represented in the south but underrepresented in employment then ESITO should look at it. One respondent who didn't say yes or no, said that pre selection days should eliminate the ones dropping out so completions should raise anyway (without support), of those that responded yes the reason was to increase diversity in the industry.

Those who responded for Transmission did not think there should be dedicated support structures in place to increase completions for these demographics.

All but one of Generation agreed that ESITO should NOT look at dedicated support structures for Māori or Pacific Islanders, the other response was “maybe”

## Skilled Migrant Research

### 10.- All

**'ESITO needs to develop a series of support tools for migrant induction, retention and qualification recognition'**

A number of respondents are actively recruiting abroad and more will in the near future. Those that have been to trade shows in the UK, use internet employment sites or post employment vacancies on their company websites. Some re-visit countries where they have had past success with employees.

Some companies prefer to train 'locals' and one said the cost and hassle involved with recruiting overseas was too high.

Of the companies that are recruiting overseas the majority have extra organisational induction processes in place, not all of these are formal but are deemed essential to retain staff. Many of these inductions now include a local /community induction for the family not just a work induction for the employee. This included local schools and shopping, introducing the new employees and families in an informal setting like a barbecue, some are pairing new employees with a fellow countryman employee who is already settled. The companies are seeing more skilled migrants staying and settling in New Zealand and the loss due to unhappy wives/partners/families is decreasing.

Aside from family pressure to return 'home', which seemed to have been countered by good community induction including families, many companies were finding some migrants were using New Zealand as a stepping stone to Australia. Some would stay long enough to gain citizenship before moving. This seemed to be a trend with the South African Workers. Some companies were bonding as a result of this. Another issue companies were facing was the migrants not really knowing what New Zealand was like and then struggling to adapt to often rural and isolated areas. More emphasis had been put into the interview and pre induction to ensure the immigrants knew what they were coming to, some companies were even bringing the perspective employees out prior to employment.

Aligning staff working together when they come from completely different cultures did not present issues for industry. There were responses that the UK workers settled easiest. There was no language barrier and they were fairly independent, many of the UK workers had moved for a change of lifestyle so they knew what they were expecting. For those who were actively recruiting

overseas they tended to go to the back to the same places (e.g. Philippines) so were able to pair new workers with some workers of the same nationality. Other companies were having regular informal get togethers to ease integration; these were often sports days or barbecue. Management were fostering a feeling of inclusiveness some were also offering communication and literacy “to help the guys fit in” more.