



B u s i n e s s V i t a l i t y

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Media Release

Next Government must work harder to develop a skilled and responsive workforce

The New Zealand Chambers of Commerce wants the incoming government to give greater attention to solving New Zealand's labour shortages.

"It is a paradox that despite the economic downturn, employers continue to face a shortage of suitably skilled workers. At the same time, New Zealand has a persistent high level of youth unemployment," said Michael Barnett, spokesman for the New Zealand Chambers of Commerce.

"There is a strong impression of a disconnect between employers wanting to recruit suitable people, people wanting work and whether we are getting full value for money from industry training organisations.

"The key requirement to address this long-standing, deep-seated conundrum is a comprehensive review of industry and vocational training services, which also focuses on what is needed to retain talent, overcome youth unemployment in local areas, and recruitment under our immigration policy."

More developed skills across the New Zealand workforce should be a major driver of the improved productivity that is needed to achieve higher levels of economic growth.

The review requires a 'whole of government and New Zealand Inc' approach focused on encouraging and managing the supply of skills and talents needed to lift our export performance, and enabling work experience for young people and unqualified school leavers to go hand in hand with training, said Mr Barnett.

Retaining Kiwi grown talent is also essential. While overseas experience benefits young people and should be encouraged, the fact that few return is one of our most serious issues. The solution is not to impose controls but to create a business and lifestyle environment that makes them want to return.

The solution to youth unemployment is not by a government agency imposing requirements on young unqualified school leaver but for willing employers seeking an expanded, productive workforce to create a positive business and lifestyle environment that makes the 'job seeker' want to work. The attitude has to be right on both sides.

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