

Food and Beverage Manufacturing

WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN



HANGA-ARO-RAU
Manufacturing, Engineering
and Logistics
Workforce Development Council

REVISED EDITION JULY 2025



The food and beverage manufacturing sector employed 89,900 in 2024, with a highly diverse workforce. However, forecasts show, the sector will need to fill over 29,000 job openings over the next five years to 2030, an average of 5,800 per year, to meet the industry's needs to grow and ensure continued productivity (Infometrics 2024). Our industries face global talent competition, particularly in areas of technical skill.

This sector includes: Dairy processing, Meat processing, Retail meat (butchery), Baking, Beverage manufacturing, Food manufacturing, Alcohol manufacturing (excluding wine)

What matters to industry matters to us

Hanga-Aro-Rau engages with the sector through our Industry Stakeholder Group (ISG) and National Industry Advisory Group (NIAGs), composed of industry leaders from around the country. This is supported by regular site visits and engagements with sector associations, business owners and key stakeholders annually. We have heard what issues the food and beverage manufacturing sector is facing specifically and below have outlined our planned actions to address each priority.

Objective	Outcome	Hanga-Aro-Rau Actions	NIAG Actions	Timeline
Information Tool Kit for Employers	<p>One place for information relating to Vocational Education and workforce development for industry employers to better understand and engage with VE system.</p> <p>Benefits all employers by having one source of information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input known resources and information from across HAR teams Provide links to other organisations resources in the one place for employers Definitions of qualifications and system terms Mapping of qualifications for F&B sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and endorse actions taken by Hanga Aro Rau to address objective Review tool kit and provide feedback Share link to final toolkit with industry networks once published Support the transition of the tool kit and its uptake by ISB once created 	<p>Draft document created – March/April</p> <p>Endorsement of Actions by NIAG – 16 May</p> <p>Tool Kit content presented to NIAG for endorsement – pre-30 June</p> <p>Publish toolkit – upon completion and sign off by NIAG members and CE/DCE by 30 December 2025</p>
Cross-sector qualification – Foundation Skills Qualification	<p>Build foundation knowledge of transferable skills across the F&B Manufacturing sector based on Level 2 F&B qualifications for those entering industry (attraction & retention).</p> <p>Bridge the gap for those entering industries that use level 3 quals for training to build confidence before starting in an F&B Manufacturing workplace.</p> <p>Provide confidence to employers to bring people into entry level roles who are ready for induction and role specific training relating to industry/business.</p> <p>Use in Gateway programmes to promote industry to school leavers.</p> <p>Can be delivered pre-employment or on the job.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create document for NIAG members to use when consulting with their industry networks to provide input on skills required – what is the purpose of consultation? What is the value to industry? Provide information on current F&B level 2 qualification content to share with NIAG members – units that exist that can be included Provide online form/portal for feedback to be sent to and collated by HAR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect with industry networks using support from HAR and discuss skill needs Provide feedback and input into scoping document Encourage Industry to engage with F&B qualification review in 2026 	<p>Scoping document created and shared with NIAG – by 31 September 2025</p> <p>TBC – online form created and shared with NIAG members</p> <p>Mapping qualifications across F&B sector</p>

2024 WDP Action	What has been actioned over the last 12 months	What will be actioned to Dec 30 2025
<p>Strong Workforce Pipeline</p> <p>Attraction & Retention</p>	<p>Inspiring the Future – event held in Manukau showcasing career opportunities in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butchery • Baking • Brewing • Food Manufacturing <p>• Collaborated with TEC to ensure there is a strong industry voice in the development of careers website Tahatū and in the National Careers System Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Case Studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolife Foods • Kiwi Kai NZ <p><u>Lumana’i action plan</u> to support Pacific workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch events well attended by employers from F&B sector in Hawkes Bay and Tāmaki Makaurau <p><u>Let’s Level Up</u> – Realising the potential of disabled workers in construction, infrastructure, manufacturing, engineering, and logistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research paper completed and launched to identify opportunities to support disabled workers and empower businesses to attract and retain untapped talent and engage a diverse workforce pipeline <p>Māori Workforce Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry engagement events with The Cause Collective to promote the HAR sectors to rangatahi across the motu • Good Employer Matrix (GEM) road show undertaken with Uptempo to introduce the matrix to employers to support Māori and Pacific workers progress into higher paid, higher skilled work with better employment opportunities <p>Industry engaged in Te Manu Arataki Leadership qualification review through Ringa Hora Workforce Development council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZ Certificate in Leadership level 3 and 4 have been completed and approved by NZQA • Further working group looking at micro-credential development following the completion of level 3 and 4 review 	<p>Further ITF employer engagement events to be scheduled and held to promote F&B sector to school leavers and community</p> <p>More employer and employee stories to be written and shared promoting career pathways in the sector</p> <p>Ongoing initiatives to engage F&B sector with Pacific Workforce team and provide support for workers</p> <p>Further engagement on the findings of the report and promote the report to industry to share findings and actionable initiatives</p> <p>F&B sector linked in with further initiatives through the Māori Workforce Development plan for 2025</p> <p>Encourage industry engagement in ongoing work to create fit-for-purpose micro-credentials to be used for leadership training – focusing on need for floor up skill building</p>
<p>Leadership Training needs</p> <p>Skills in leadership, line management, and decision-making</p>		

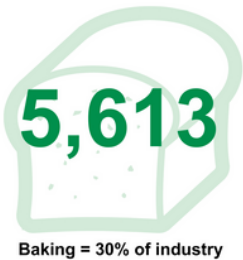
2024 WDP Action	What has been actioned over the last 12 months	What will be actioned to Dec 30 2025
Recognition of Prior Learning	<p>Continue to advocate within the VET sector for better support and recognition of the existing and prior knowledge, skills, and experience of the workforce</p> <p>Engaging with Food & Fibre Cove to better understand the research and pilot programme they commissioned to look at RPL and ways to include F&B employers in the project</p>	<p>Identify opportunity to engage F&B manufacturers with the project and update on new development</p>
Qualification and Recognition Challenges	<p>Qualification Reviews completed in 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butchery (Qualification and Unit Standard review) • Meat Processing level 3 (Qualification and Unit Standard review) <p>Qualification Reviews completed and ongoing in 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baking level 3 and 4 (Qualification and Unit Standard review) - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Qualifications have been approved by NZQA and will be published on the qualification framework ◦ Unit standards are with NZQA waiting approval • Meat Processing level 4 (Qualification and Unit Standard review) • Fellmongery (Qualification and Unit Standard review) <p>Micro-credentials have been developed through qualification reviews across HAR and continued advocacy for review of funding for provision of micro-credentials done through TEC advice given for 2024/2025</p> <p>Business case submitted for new qualification development for the Brewing industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry request for micro credentials to be created based on level 4 qualification <p>Qualification mapping across sector to show relevant qualifications available for each industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qual map created and linked to WDP and to be included in Employer Tool Kit <p>Training Pathways – work ongoing with Pathways Team</p>	<p>Fellmongery review continuing</p> <p>Dairy Processing level 5 and 6 scheduled in workplan</p> <p>Inclusion in TEC advice</p> <p>Progress updated to group</p>

Sector snapshot

Size of the sector



GDP: In 2024, F & B processing industries contributed \$11.5 billion, which is 2.8% of the total economy.



No. of businesses (2024): 5,613, with baking 30%, food & beverage manufacturing 28% and retail meat 15%.



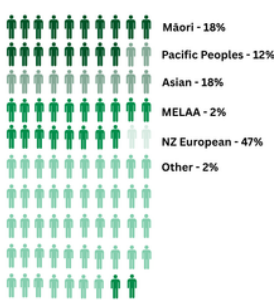
Māori-owned businesses (2021): The sector had 12 or 1.2% (in ⅓ where ownership data was available).



Employment: Continues to grow and is forecast to reach around 97,200 in 2030, around 7,300 more than 2024.

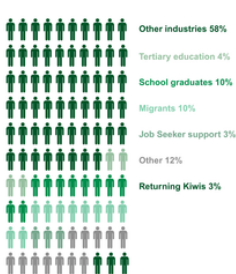


No. of Māori employed (2023).

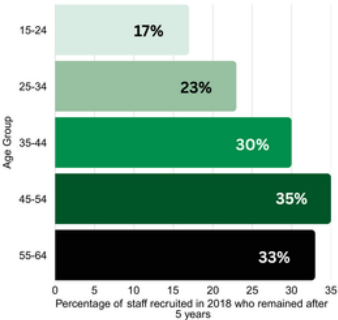


Ethnicity data for sector (2023). Total response ethnicity allows multiple ethnicities for each individual.

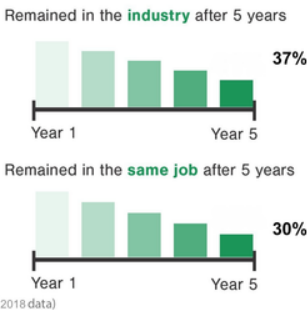
Trends and forecasts



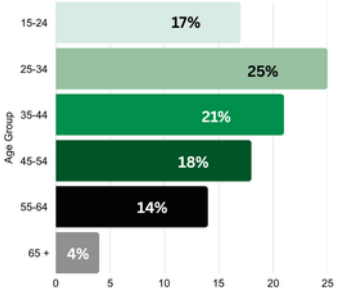
New entrants: From 24,100 to 30,000 between 2015 and 2023. Most from other industries, showing opportunity for attraction.



Retention of new entrants: Of the 2018 new entrants, the proportion of each age group who remained after 5 years.



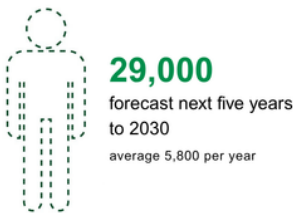
Overall retention: Of the 2018 workforce, 37% remained in the industry after 5 years and 30% were in the same job after 5 years.



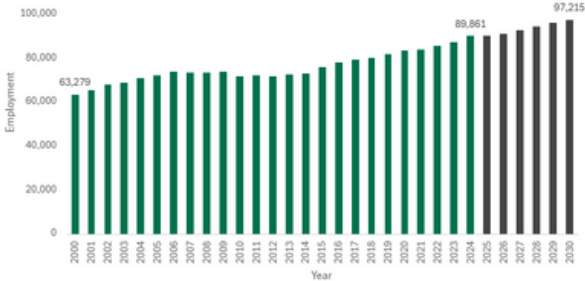
Age breakdown: 15-24-year-olds stayed at around 17% (2015-2023), 55+ age group grew from 17% to 18% over the same period.



Gender split (2024): 41% of the workforce is female, up from 38% in 2015.



Forecast: 29,000 openings over the next 5 years (average 5,800 p/a), 25% due to growth and 75% due to workers leaving/retiring.



Employment: History and forecast



Cross-Sector Action Plan

The below forms part of HAR actions until 31 December 2025 and will be tabled to the new ISB for future actions

Objective	Outcome	Hanga-Aro-Rau Actions	NIAG Actions	Timeline
Qualifications and Recognition To address challenges with Recognition of Prior Learning, current skills and experience in our sectors	<p>The vocational education system effectively recognises and validates prior learning and experience, enhancing upward mobility, transferability, and transparency of current skills.</p> <p>The result will be formalising skills and knowledge through qualifications.</p>	<p>Actively advocate for Recognition of prior learning as a programme of work/conversations all WDCs are having with NZQA and providers.</p>	<p>Support and endorse actions taken by Hanga Aro Rau to address objective.</p>	<p>31 December</p>
Advocate for funding gaps to recognise Prior Learning in Manufacturing, Engineering and Logistics (MEL)	<p>Adequate funding is secured for the formal recognition of prior learning and experience in manufacturing, engineering and logistics for the benefit of employers and learners to help alleviate financial burden.</p>	<p>HAR has responded through our Advice to TEC function.</p>	<p>Support and endorse actions taken by Hanga Aro Rau to address objective.</p>	<p>31 December</p>
Better streamline qualification development to address delays in sector training	<p>The development and implementation process for qualifications, programmes, and unit standards in the MEL sectors is expedited and efficient.</p>	<p>HAR have worked across the vocational education system with TEC, NZQA, and Providers to address the systemic challenges that slow things down by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early signalling to providers by giving early notice of upcoming reviews • Tighter project management • Shared language and expectations • Proactive engagement with system agencies • Early and deep industry involvement • Expanding our provider network. 	<p>Support and endorse actions taken by Hanga Aro Rau to address objectives.</p>	<p>31 December</p>

Cross-Sector Action Plan

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Objective	Outcome	Hanga-Aro-Rau Actions	NIAG Actions	Timeline
Ageing Workforce Providing Transition support for retaining the older workforce in Hanga-Aro-Rau Industries	<p>Transition support is provided to experienced older workers to move into less physically demanding positions and to transition and retain senior workers into leadership and training roles.</p> <p>Employers will be able to develop and maintain succession planning and attract and retain talent.</p>	<p>We keep industry updated on quantifiable data and new research on the ageing workforce giving industries the opportunity to respond.</p>	<p>Support and endorse actions taken by Hanga Aro Rau to address objective.</p>	<p>31 December</p>
Acknowledging the skills gap for older workers in a rapidly evolving technological environment	<p>Older workers receive the necessary training and support to adapt to new technologies and processes, ensuring they can effectively keep pace with rapidly evolving sector advancements.</p> <p>Industry retains the skills and knowledge of older workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the Level 3 digital skills qualification and the development of a Level 4 qualification. Incorporation of new technology skills into our qualification reviews. 	<p>Support and endorse actions taken by Hanga Aro Rau to address objective.</p>	<p>31 December</p>

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Objective	Outcome	Hanga-Aro-Rau Actions	NIAG Actions	Timeline
Stronger Workforce Pipeline Attracting young talent and improving the industry profile	<p>Improved visibility of MEL sectors to attract younger talent, ensuring they are well-informed about the career opportunities available within the MEL sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAR has delivered the TEC Inspiring the Future (ITF) programme and continues to support the development of the Tāhātu Career Navigator website. ITF events seek to break down barriers and stereotypes, especially for young Māori and Pacific students. HAR works with other organisations like Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development agencies and AMA to promote and attract talent. HAR will develop and publish qualification pathways. Communicate and publish case studies. 	<p>Support and endorse actions taken by Hanga Aro Rau to address objective.</p>	<p>31 December</p>
Overcoming Literacy and Numeracy Barriers: Enhancing Training and Advancement Opportunities	<p>Industry is more aware and has better access to literacy and numeracy support, ensuring that all individuals could receive future training and advancement.</p> <p>This approach promotes equitable access to education and career growth, enabling a more skilled and capable workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HAR advocate in this space through our TEC advice and by advising employers of the various literacy and numeracy programmes to engage. Supporting digital literacy awareness by promoting Level 3 digital skills qualification and the development of a Level 4 qualification. Broker introductions between industry and providers for specialist support. 	<p>Support and endorse actions taken by Hanga Aro Rau to address objective.</p>	<p>31 December</p>

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Objective	Outcome	Hanga-Aro-Rau Actions	NIAG Actions	Timeline
<p>Enabling a strong economy, including a strong Māori economy</p>	<p>Employers successfully engage, attract, and retain a diverse workforce, including Māori, Pacific, Women, and Disabled Peoples, by looking beyond traditional employment pools. This approach addresses labour shortages and fosters an inclusive, dynamic, and skilled workforce that meets the evolving needs of the sector.</p> <p>Industry successfully embeds Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles and embraces Te Reo Māori, creating a supportive environment for the growing Māori workforce.</p> <p>This approach enables the estimated 50,000 Māori entering the workforce over the next five years are well-supported, helping to address labour shortages and fostering a more inclusive and culturally aware industry.</p>	<p>HAR advocate the importance of the growing Māori workforce.</p> <p>We're identifying workforce gaps and leveraging opportunities to enhance access for Pacific Peoples within MEL sectors. Through engagement of Lumana'i o Tangata Moana, Hanga-Aro-Rau Pacific Peoples Workforce Development Action Plan, we're working to ensure strengthened outcomes within the vocational education system, empowering Pacific learners and workers to thrive.</p> <p>Empowering Disabled Individuals: Our Disability Research Project Report, informed by extensive engagement and research, identified barriers and opportunities to enhance support for disabled individuals in training and employment. Let's level up disability project launched to promote potential of disabled workforce to meet skill needs of the sector.</p>	<p>Support and endorse actions taken by Hanga Aro Rau to address objective.</p>	<p>31 December</p> <p>White Paper: Unlocking the potential of Māori and the Māori economy</p> <p>Mahere Whanake Māori Plan</p> <p>White Paper: Unlocking the potential of Pacific Peoples</p> <p>Lumana'i o Tangata Moana</p> <p>White Paper: Unlocking the potential of the disabled workforce</p> <p>Let's level up</p>

We want to hear from you

These Workforce Development Plans are our functions in action and remain agile to changing Industry and VET sector needs. We encourage and seek continual feedback, so if you would like to contact our team, please email info@hangaarorau.nz

