

# He rangi whawhatai kō, he tau hāwera

## Te kano ki te rau Report summary

*He rangi whawhatai kō, he tau hāwera* is the first workforce development plan (WDP) by Toi Mai for Toi Ora, which encompasses recreational and cultural organisations and the workforce that supports them. It includes activities, technologies and places that foster wellbeing, physically, mentally and socially. This WDP focuses specifically on the exercise industry and is the result of interviews with 17 industry leaders and further engagements with 80-plus industry people, supported by sector analytics and data. The engagements and understandings developed during this process inform the recommendations to initiate the changes needed to ensure a thriving workforce and productive exercise industry.

The exercise industry includes large private commercial (chain), large public commercial (councils), franchise, one-off private commercial, and community groups and initiatives. The industry struggles with poor staff retention and high turnover, especially in the personal training space, stifling workforce development, and our investigation found its key challenges to be:

- qualifications, training and pathways poorly aligned with industry requirements
- commercial gym models serving as a barrier to a thriving and sustainable workforce
- lacking efforts to pull in clientele from diverse populations
- a lack of a forum to address the industry's challenges collectively
- a reliance on poorly prepared graduates each year to maintain the workforce
- courses being too theory based with not enough emphasis on teaching and assessing the practical skills (including coaching, business and interpersonal skills) required to be successful
- a lack of a fit-for-purpose training pathway for group training despite it being the fastest growth sector in the industry.

To contextualise these findings, this WDP is full of metaphorical language, drawing inspiration from māra kai (traditional food gardens). Māra kai provide sustenance and oranga (life) for the iwi (tribe). As such, there is a nice correlation between māra kai and the exercise industry within Toi Ora, which also provides oranga for the community. Further to this metaphor, the following recommendations and actions are framed as ngā kō (the tools required) and ngā kerī (the acts of digging) respectively, all working towards a thriving exercise industry by 2035.

## Kia pai i te hua

### Strategic goals and recommendations

#### Ngā kō

##### Our recommendations

- Education providers to update current programmes (including assessments) to reflect industry-specific practical skills and contain less theory.
- Industry to explore alternative ‘safe start’ options for new PTs before moving to the established rent model.

#### Ngā kerī

##### Toi Mai actions

##### Toi Mai to:

1. produce skill standards for Exercise Level 4 that emphasise practical application of business skills, interpersonal skills and practical coaching experience
2. develop programme guidance for the exercise fundamentals micro-credential to cater to both group coaching roles and one-on-one personal training
3. research current community exercise models of operating including training requirements
4. convene with Exercise New Zealand exercise industry leaders to collectively discuss workforce challenges and opportunities
5. advocate for changes to funding settings that allow providers to sustainably offer small, flexible and responsive packets of learning to keep pace with industry requirements.

To download the full plan, visit [toimai.nz](https://toimai.nz)