

Kia ita! To be tight!

Te kano ki te rau Report summary

Kia Ita! is the first workforce development plan (WDP) for Toi ā-Ringa (the art and design sector) created by Toi Mai Workforce Development Council. This plan specifically focuses on the barbering and hairdressing industry and is supported by the results of sector data/analytics and interviews, wānanga and other engagements with barbers and hairdressers from across the motu.

This WDP takes barbering and hairdressing back to its roots in Aotearoa, promoting the need for support for this industry by emphasising the cultural significance of hair within te ao Māori, drawing inspiration from the ancient Māori story of Māui surviving from the topknot of Taranga – “to be tight” (as in a topknot) is a strong theme throughout.

In our engagements and research, Toi Mai found that barbers and hairdressers faced different but similar challenges:

For barbers

- Barber qualifications, training and pathways are not fit for purpose, and graduates are not work ready on completion of provider-based training.
- Community training providers face funding barriers.
- Barbers don't feel valued and well respected due to a lack of representation in governance.
- Current health and safety standards are not relevant for barbers or hairdressers.
- The barbering industry is underprepared for its social effects.
- The barbering business model is shifting with the use of technology and training is not keeping up with it.

For hairdressers

- The hairdressing industry faces talent gaps and workforce shortages.
- Hairdressing qualifications take too long to complete and are not fit for purpose, with graduates entering the industry with widely varied skill levels, not ready to work.
- There is a slow uptake from providers of new hairdressing qualifications.
- Health and safety standards for hairdressers are out of date.

To tackle these challenges, this plan has identified various solutions-focused recommendations and actions. Our hope is that these, if enacted, will bind together the loose strands of dishevelled hair within the industry and unite the hair and barbering communities, just like the heru – a traditional Māori comb used to keep long hair fastened in a topknot – does so effectively, as we work towards a thriving workforce by 2035.

Kia pai i te hua

Strategic goals and recommendations

Our recommendations

- **Barbering**
 - Review the funding criteria for community barber training.
 - Develop barbering-specific safety regulations.
- **Hairdressing**
 - Hairdressing training providers increase work-based learning opportunities in their programmes.
 - Review and update health regulations to reflect contemporary hairdressing practices.
 - Revise hairdressing apprenticeship structure and funding model to align with revised training and qualifications.

Toi Mai actions

- **Barbering**
 - Review and improve barbering qualifications, training and pathways for practical skills and cultural relevance.
 - Include contemporary business and marketing skills in barbering training and qualifications.
 - Promote mental health first aid training within barbering professional development.
 - Advocate for improved representation for barbers within industry training and governance.
- **Hairdressing**
 - Promote mental health first aid training within hairdressing professional development.
 - Work with hairdressing industry representatives and training providers to monitor graduate outcomes, and review hairdressing qualifications as a suite once outcomes are known.

To download the full plan, visit toimai.nz