

Ngā Awa Kōrero The Rivers of Narrative

Te kano ki te rau Report summary

Ngā Awa Kōrero is the first workforce development plan (WDP) for the journalism sector created by Toi Mai Workforce Development Council. This plan is the result of sector data analysis, interviews and other engagements with journalists in varied roles and stages of their career from across the motu. *Ngā Awa Kōrero* lays the foundation for empowering the journalism sector to make it more resilient and sustainable, supported by a diverse and highly skilled workforce.

The WDP highlights a number of themes drawn from our research and engagements, including challenges facing the sector and opportunities for sector growth:

- The majority of training does not prepare learners for a career in journalism.
- There is a ‘missing middle’ in newsrooms as mid-career journalists leave for more stable work with better compensation; without them, industry loses knowledge and capability.
- The regions can provide a meaningful pathway for the future of journalism.
- The workforce needs to reflect changes in demographics and audiences by attracting more Māori, Pacific and Asian people.
- Diverse revenue streams are needed to reduce reliance on delivery platforms that support the dissemination of news.
- The sector needs better collaboration between organisations.
- Regulation is no longer fit for purpose.

In envisioning the future of the journalism sector in Aotearoa, we’ve drawn inspiration from ngā awa (the rivers) to help visualise and support the narrative of the interconnectedness the journalism sector brings to our communities, and how different elements of the sector function – and why it’s necessary to support these elements for ngā awa kōrero (the rivers of narrative) to flow and serve their essential service to our culture and society.

We have identified a number of recommendations and actions to tackle these challenges, embrace these opportunities and keep ngā awa flowing.

Kia pai i te hua

Strategic goals and recommendations

Toi Mai actions

- Work with industry, agencies, providers and funders to explore, develop and implement a cadetship/work-based learning-type model for junior journalists.
- Work with Te Māngai Pāho to progress some actions from the Māori Workforce Development and Capability Plan, particularly for Māori journalism.
- Establish a forum to convene industry and providers (across all levels) to discuss common concerns and opportunities specifically around training, retention and attraction, and how journalism training can be fit for purpose for the sector.

Our recommendations

- Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Media and Communications to direct the Ministry for Culture and Heritage to explore options for setting up a fund designated for industry training, with contributions from both government and industry.
- Parliamentary Under-Secretary to direct the Ministry for Culture and Heritage to work with the Treasury to explore the viability of digital news subscription tax credits for subscribers.
- Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Media and Communications seeks advice on where regulation is constraining the journalism industry, e.g. Broadcasting Act 1989 and Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015.
- Ministry of Education to review the funding categories to align Journalism programmes to be funded at the 'F2: Trades' rate, rather than 'F1: Humanities, Business and Social Service Vocations'.

To download the full plan and find out more about how to provide feedback, visit toimai.nz