ICCDPP
THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

CATE
Ngā Kaitohutohu Rapuara Aotearoa
Careers and Transition Education Association NZ

Tertiary Education Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

Country Report

10th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, Auckland, New Zealand, November 2026

Country name

Aotearoa New Zealand

This country report has been prepared for discussion and information purposes in connection with the 10th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy. It draws on an online questionnaire on the Symposium themes, which national teams were invited to complete in advance.

ICCDPP: Navigating new horizons - Country perspectives survey

Introduction

Q1. Do you agree to participate in this survey?

Yes

Q2. I confirm that I am providing a response on behalf of my country.

Yes

Q3. I confirm that I am happy for the responses to this survey to be shared publicly.

Yes

Q4. Is your country going to participate in the 2026 ICCDPP symposium in New Zealand?

Yes

Q5. Who have you consulted with before completing this survey?

We form part of the New Zealand (NZ) country team – the following members have been consulted during the completion of this survey: Nina Ive, DCE the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC); Leigh Gray, Careers and Transitions Educator Association NZ (CATE); Jennie Miller, Careers Development Association of NZ (CDANZ); Josh Williams Skills Group; Professor Christine Woods, Auckland University; and Simon Mandal-Johnson, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). We have also engaged with the two other NZ teams: the Māori team, and Pacific team.

The “New Zealand” team takes the perspective of national career information and development products and services that are publicly funded or are in some way partnered with government services. We want to acknowledge the Māori and Pacific Teams perspectives of the NZ career system, that may also draw upon regional and community-based programmes.

About you

Q6. What is your name?

Nina Ive

Q7. What organisation do you work for?

Tertiary Education Commission | Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

Q8. What is your job title?

DCE, Careers and Investment Design Directorate

Q9. What is your email address?

Nina.ive@tec.govt.nz

Q10. Are you happy for your contact details to be published on the ICCDPP website/ relevant documents as part of the publication of this data?

Yes

About your country

Q11. What is the name of your country?

Aotearoa New Zealand

Q12. Which groups can access career development services in your country?

	Accessible and free to everyone	Accessible and free to some groups	Accessible to those who can pay	Not accessible
Indigenous people		X		
Young people in schools		X		
Young people in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)		X		
Young people in university or higher education		X		
Young people not in education or work (e.g. NEETs)		X		
Adults in education		X		
Adults in work			X	
Adults not in education or work (e.g. unemployed workers and the economic inactive)		X		
Migrants		X		
People in the criminal justice system		X		
Employers/businesses			X	

Q13. Are there any other groups in your country, not listed in Question 12 above, that can access career development services?

We define good accessibility to include available, having capacity (regardless of location), easy to find and navigate, culturally inclusive, actively removes barriers to access (based on culture, language, neurodiversity, disability etc).

Career development services that people can access can have both CDANZ qualified practitioners (eg. Accident Compensation Corporation vocational rehabilitation service, Direct Career Service), or career and employability trained staff (eg. some career advisers in schools, employment work brokers).

Q13. Are there any other groups in your country, not listed in Question 12 above, that can access career development services?

Other groups to consider:
• Vocational rehabilitation (through Accident Compensation Corporation services)
• Those impacted by redundancies or business closure (variable)
• Former refugees (variable)
• People living in rural or remote location (sometimes careers support is online only)

About your country

Q14. How far do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The career development policies, programmes and services in my country are meeting the career needs of the population.				X	
School leavers in my country are well prepared for successful transitions to work or further learning.			X		
There is a strong evidence base to support the provision of career development services in my country.		X			
AI is having a major impact on the education system in my country.		X			
AI is having a major impact on labour market in my country.		X			
AI is having a major impact on the provision of career development services in my country.				X	

Q15. Are indigenous groups involved in the design of career development services in your country?

Yes, to some extent

About your country

Q16. Please provide a short summary of your country's career development system. [Up to 300 words]

New Zealand's career development system is a mixed model of publicly and privately funded and delivered, and community-led services, with access points that are free, referral-based, or paid. It supports individuals of all ages to explore options, make informed decisions, and manage career pathways across the life course. Visibility and knowledge about careers guidance remains a challenge for people accessing careers support.
The "New Zealand" team takes the perspective of national career information and development products and services that are publicly funded or are in some way partnered with government services. We want to acknowledge the Māori and Pacific Teams perspectives of the NZ career system, that may also draw upon regional and community-based programmes.
There is a centralised government career information platform. Tahatū Career Navigator is New Zealand's foundation for career information. This is the government's central web platform, proving integrated information on 800+ occupations, 4000+ qualifications, and 100 school subjects, alongside tools to help users identify their skills and interests, explore pathways, and take action. This is complemented by a wider ecosystem of institutional and commercial platforms, including university career portals and paid

Q16. Please provide a short summary of your country’s career development system. [Up to 300 words]

advisory services.
Career education for young people is delivered primarily through New Zealand's schooling system. Under the Education and Training Act 2020, state and state-integrated schools are required to provide appropriate career education and guidance for students in Years 7–13. Career education aims to support learners to understand themselves, explore learning and work opportunities, make informed decisions, and successfully navigate transitions throughout their lives. Within secondary schools, programmes typically combine classroom career learning, individual guidance, subject selection support, pathway planning, employer engagement, workplace learning, tertiary transition support and whānau engagement. Schools are supported through operational funding, including the Careers Education Information Grant, together with initiatives such as the Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) funding, Gateway and Trades Academies, which strengthen connections between education, training and employment. Responsibility for programme design and delivery, however, sits with individual schools. Consequently, provision varies considerably in quality, curriculum integration, staffing and learner access. While many schools provide comprehensive, whole-school career education programmes, New Zealand currently has no nationally mandated career education framework to ensure consistency across the system. While many schools provide comprehensive, whole-school career education programmes, New Zealand currently has no nationally mandated career education framework to ensure consistency across the system.
National resources and initiatives support school-based career education such as Tahatū Career Navigator and Inspiring the Future, which enables schools to connect students with volunteer role models from a wide range of occupations, supporting meaningful encounters with the world of work.
Career support services span a diverse and fragmented landscape. Public services include employment and income support (eg. MSD work and income), vocational rehabilitation (eg. Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), and community-based provision funded through various government agencies. Organisations like (Ministry of Social Development’s (MSD) Direct Career Service are staffed by Career Development Association of NZ (CDANZ) qualified practitioners – however, they have caps on provision; whereas online services like MSD’s Te Heke Mai website, offers digital tools and support, with some personalised coaching. There are also services that particularly cater to different cohorts of people, including young people not in education, employment or training. MSD’s community coaching initiative also supports job search efforts for young people on Job Seeker benefits.
Within tertiary education, career practitioners, mentors, and kaiako support learners, are often funded through student levies. Māori and iwi-led services provide culturally grounded support, while businesses and employers contribute through workforce development and internal career pathways. Private providers offer professional career coaching and transition services on a commercial basis.
Many larger employees provide Employee Assistance Programmes, making various personal support services available on an anonymous basis for their employees, with some including career development support.
Overall, the system offers broad coverage and multiple entry points, but is characterised by variability in quality, limited coordination, and gaps in consistent, equitable access - particularly for young people at key transition stages.
Two peak bodies play a key role in professionalisation and practitioner support. These are the CDANZ and Career and Transition Educators (CATE). A National Careers System Strategy is guiding system change along with a new National Careers Action Plan 2026-2027.

Q17. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide insights into your country’s career development policies and systems. [Up to 300 words]

National Careers System Strategy (NCSS) – Tertiary Education Commission
This is the strategy document setting the direction for New Zealand’s careers system. It outlines the vision of a lifelong, integrated system that supports people to make informed career decisions and transitions, with a strong focus on equity, quality, and system visibility and coordination. A new action plan guides implementation: National Careers Action Plan 2026-2027
https://www.tec.govt.nz/strategic-initiatives/careers-system/national-careers-system-strategy/national-careers-system-strategy
https://www.tec.govt.nz/strategic-initiatives/careers-system/national-careers-system-strategy/action-plan

New Zealand’s Career Quality Framework
The Careers Quality Framework supports those working in careers to reflect on and deliver quality careers education, information, advice and guidance for all New Zealanders.
https://tahatu.govt.nz/career-practice-hub/best-practice/new-zealands-careers-quality-framework

Tahatū Career Navigator

Q17. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide insights into your country's career development policies and systems. [Up to 300 words]

The government's national careers information platform provides integrated data on careers, qualifications, and pathways, supporting users to explore options and make decisions. It is a key tool underpinning the NCSS and widely used by practitioners and the public.
https://tahatu.govt.nz/

Education and Training Act 2020 – provides the legislative basis for career education and guidance in New Zealand schools (Years 7–13).
Career Education and Guidance in NZ schools (MoE)
https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0038/latest/lms170676.html

MoE guidance for career educators.
https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/career-education-and-guidance-in-new-zealand-schools/5637256331.p

Careers Education and Guidance: Good Practice.
https://thehub.sia.govt.nz/assets/documents/ERO-CareersEdu-Guid-2015-WEB2.pdf
Report from 2015 review.

Transitions from secondary schools
Research into transitions from secondary school report gives a rich understanding of how school leavers decide post-school pathways and what influences their decisions.
https://tahatu.govt.nz/career-practice-hub/research-and-policy/transitions-from-secondary-school-insights-report

Empowering our Youth: career processes, strategies and practices
https://www.epit.org.nz/reports/empowering-our-youth
Research showing the complexity and inequity of transitions, especially for Māori, Pacific, and lower socio-economic learners. Whole-school, well-supported careers programmes and strong partnerships significantly improve outcomes.

CDANZ website and professional standards https://cdanz.org.nz/
CATE support and resources https://www.cate.co.nz/

Low Paid Worker Research [unpublished, online by time of symposium]
Mapping analysis of the careers system [TEC, unpublished]

Q18. Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about the way in which your country organises its career development services? [Up to 300 words]

In 2023, more than 700 stakeholders contributed to the development of New Zealand's National Careers System Strategy. The strategy recognises that the careers system comprises many interconnected services and sets a direction towards a more coherent, lifelong approach to career development. Its implementation continues to be led by the Tertiary Education Commission, with a refreshed Action Plan for 2026–2027 intended to support sustained system change.

Despite broad provision, significant fragmentation remains at key transition points, including movement from school to tertiary education or employment, tertiary study to work, and periods of mid-career change. While the strategy provides overall direction, no single agency holds responsibility or all the necessary policy and funding levers across the education, employment and social sectors. Cross-agency coordination is therefore essential.
The system is also operating within a period of major reform. Changes to vocational education and training are occurring alongside secondary curriculum and qualification reforms, including the planned replacement of NCEA from 2028 and expanded Trades Academy provision. These changes create opportunities to strengthen pathways, but also increase the need for accessible, high-quality career education and guidance so that learners and whānau [family] can understand and navigate changing options.

Digital infrastructure is also developing. Tahatū Career Navigator is improving access to integrated career, qualification and pathway information and is expected to incorporate further data-informed and AI-enabled

Q18. Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about the way in which your country organises its career development services? [Up to 300 words]

tools. These resources support exploration and decision making.

Ongoing priorities include improving coordination across transition points, strengthening the consistency and capability of the career development workforce, translating labour-market and workforce information into accessible guidance, and ensuring that all people - regardless of location or background - can access high-quality career support. This includes overcoming persistent barriers including the influence of socioeconomics, and any digital and technological divide.

Productivity and the inclusive economy

Q19. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services contribute to economic growth.		X			
Career development services contribute to workforce productivity.		X			
Career development services deliver a positive return on investment on public spending.		X			
Career development services support entrepreneurialism.			X		
Career development services help to address employers' skills and labour needs.			X		
Career development services can be accessed by small and medium sized businesses (SMEs).				X	
Career development services improve levels of job satisfaction.			X		
Career development services contribute to decent work (jobs with access to training, a living wage and other benefits).		X			
Career development services support equality of access to learning and work opportunities.			X		
Career development services contribute to the green transition.				X	

Productivity and the inclusive economy

Q20. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support productivity. [Up to 300 words]

Career development services connect the skills people build with the work the economy actually needs. They help young people and adults make informed choices, provide evidence that vocational and academic routes lead to successful outcomes, and move the skills and training system toward areas of real labour market demand. Careers support is also necessary to support the long-term pipeline of people

Q20. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support productivity. [Up to 300 words]

into the careers where we have endemic skills gaps.

That matching function is where careers work links directly to productivity.

New Zealand's productivity challenge is longstanding. On the OECD's measure of GDP per hours worked, our growth trend broadly tracks with comparable countries over the past two decades, but our productivity level (GDP per hour worked) remains stubbornly low, sitting around a fifth below the OECD average and well behind Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

However, productivity is driven by many factors, including capital investment, firm capability and innovation, as well as skills matching labour market requirements. OECD data show that New Zealand graduates are more likely to work in occupations or industries that do not directly match their highest qualification's field of study (43 percent compared with the OECD average of 38 percent).

Demographic change is tightening the future workforce at the same time as youth unemployment has reached its highest level in more than thirty years, at 17.3 percent, with the NEET rate climbing alongside it. This represents social cost now and inevitable productivity cost in future. We are producing twice as many NEETs as apprentices straight from school, while over half of our workplace trainees and apprentices have already completed tertiary certificates, diplomas and degrees.

Q21. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support an inclusive economy. [Up to 300 words]

An inclusive economy is supported through career development policies and services that aim to ensure all people, regardless of their background or circumstances, can access learning, work and career opportunities. The National Careers System Strategy (NCSS) explicitly identifies equitable access to careers information, advice and guidance as a core system goal and positions career support as a mechanism for improving education and employment outcomes across the life course.

In practice, New Zealand's careers system supports inclusion through a combination of universal and targeted approaches. Universal services such as Tahatū Career Navigator provide free, nationally available careers information, education and planning tools for people at different life stages; while targeted programmes such as Rangatahi Futures and Career Malaga career programmes support specific cohorts of young people. Many private practices and private career programmes enable positive career development services across schools, communities, groups and individuals.

However, as noted, careers services are not consistently and systematically accessible, while the connection between career services and strong workforce planning has been variable.

Q22. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights into the relationship in your country between policies for career development, and policies for productivity and the inclusive economy. [Up to 300 words]

Earnings effects of educational mismatch in New Zealand: evidence over a decade | International Journal of Manpower (May 202
https://www.emerald.com/ijm/article/47/10/171/1368224/Earnings-effects-of-educational-mismatch-in-New

Skills Group: Multiple Pathways to Success: April 2026 https://skills-group.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Mutliple-Pathways-to-

Infometrics: Improving School Leaver Destinations: Feb 2025 https://economics.infometrics.co.nz/video/webinar/2025-02-improvi
_gl=1*vi498e*_ga*NjEyMDM4ODI2LjE3Nzg2NDQ5MDY.*_ga_N8QXLZ5G5F*czE3ODIwODQ4NzMkbzIkZzAkdDE3ODIwODQ4

OECD: Survey of Adult Skills: New Zealand (2023) https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/survey-of-adults-skills-2023-country-not
zealand_d67971ff-en.html#section-d1e347

Equity of access and participation in tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand: the tale of three regions - Brownie - 2025 - Kōtu
Sciences Online - Wiley Online Library https://rsnz.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1080/1177083X.2024.2319118

Enhancing skills and developing technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Q23. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services support people to develop skills			X		
Career development services support people to access training		X			
Career development services support the uptake of TVET pathways		X			
Career development services support lifelong learning			X		

Q24. What are the biggest challenges for participation in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system in your country? [Please tick all that apply.]

School leavers do not see TVET pathways as attractive
Parents do not see TVET pathways as attractive for their children
TVET options do not provide opportunities for educational progression e.g. to higher education
High rates of drop-out from TVET
Lack of career development services for learners considering TVET
The influence of gender stereotyping on TVET choices
Shortage of employers offering training placements
Poor alignment between TVET provision and employers' needs

Enhancing skills and developing technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Q25. At what age do young people generally move onto a TVET pathway if that is the path they take?

Generally this starts in Year 12, aged 17 years +. However, joint pathways are possible (University Entrance + TVET). See below for curriculum reforms taking place.

Q26. Does the age of pathway selection cause challenges for your TVET system?

No

Q27. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the age of pathway selection? [Up to 300 words]

See below

Q28. Provide further information on the ways in which policies for career development services in your country enhance policies for skills development, TVET, and lifelong learning. [Up to 300 words]

New Zealand is undertaking significant reform across its skills, vocational education and training (VET), and secondary education systems. A new vocational education and training system commenced in 2026, including the establishment of Industry Skills Boards (ISBs) to provide industry leadership on workforce

Q28. Provide further information on the ways in which policies for career development services in your country enhance policies for skills development, TVET, and lifelong learning. [Up to 300 words]

skill needs, qualifications, standards and training. The reforms aim to create a more responsive and integrated skills system that better aligns education and training with current and future labour market demand. At the same time, secondary education is undergoing curriculum and qualification reform, including the proposed introduction of industry-led subjects developed by the ISBs within a new senior secondary curriculum and the planned replacement of the current main secondary school qualifications (NCEA) from 2028, with the New Zealand Certificate of Education (Year 12 students) and the New Zealand Advanced Certificate of Education (Year 13 students), and a new foundational qualification for Year 11 students.

Within secondary schools, vocational pathways are currently supported through programmes such as Gateway, STAR and Trades Academies. Gateway provides structured workplace learning linked to school programmes, STAR enables access to vocational and tertiary learning opportunities, and Trades Academies combine school-based learning with industry-relevant education and training. The Government has recently expanded Trades Academy places, reflecting an increased emphasis on vocational and work-based learning. Youth Guarantee funding supports young people who have left school with low or no qualifications to achieve a full qualification in a tertiary education setting and includes Wellbeing and Pathways support and access to career guidance.

Despite these developments, achieving parity of esteem between vocational and university pathways remains an ongoing challenge. University continues to be perceived by many students and parents as the preferred post-school destination, although only around 30% of New Zealand school leavers progress directly to university. Participation is considerably lower in many provincial and rural communities, where apprenticeships, vocational education and direct employment are more common destinations.

Alongside increasing participation, improving apprenticeship completion rates and strengthening transitions between school, vocational education, tertiary study and employment remain key priorities. Ensuring that skills policy, workforce planning and career development are better connected will be critical to supporting lifelong learning and responding to New Zealand's changing workforce needs.

Q29. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights about how career development services can enhance skills and support TVET. [Up to 300 words]

Tertiary Education Strategy 2025–2030 (Ministry of Education/TEC) – explains the government's priorities for tertiary education, skills development and vocational learning
https://web-assets.education.govt.nz/s3fs-public/2025-11/Tertiary Education Strategy - 2025-2030.pdf?VersionId=kaSBNy7noyUr0ZbRDPlSOg4SI5MR1fvg

Developing Talent – Going for Growth (MBIE) – outlines the Government's broader workforce, skills and vocational education reforms, including the new VET system and Industry Skills Boards. Developing Talent | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-growth/going-for-growth/developing-talent

Gateway Funding enables schools to provide senior students (years 11-13+) with opportunities to access structured workplace learning, typically but not exclusively aligned to vocational pathways.https://youthguarantee.education.govt.nz/initiatives/opportunities-at-school-and-beyond/gatewayfunding/

Trades Academies are a form of Secondary-Tertiary programme that aim to engage young people in education and equip them with the relevant vocational skills and training to succeed in the world of work.
https://youthguarantee.education.govt.nz/initiatives/opportunities-at-school-and-beyond/trades-academies/

Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) funding can be used by schools to support students to transition to further study and employment.
https://www.education.govt.nz/education-professionals/schools-year-0-13/funding-and-financials/secondary-tertiary-alignment-resource-star

Ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable groups can thrive

Q30. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services help vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to thrive.			X		
Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups can access career development services.			X		
Career development services support vulnerable groups to access decent work.			X		
Career development services support vulnerable groups to access the education and training system.			X		
There is adequate funding for career development services targeting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.				X	
Policies for social inclusion intersect with policies for education, training, and employment.		X			

Q31. Which disadvantaged and vulnerable groups does your government have policies to support and which are provided with bespoke or targeted career development services. [Tick all that apply]

	Government has policies to support	Provided with bespoke or targeted career development services
Indigenous people		
Women and girls		
Men and boys		
Ethnic minorities		
Religious minorities		
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people		
People from low-socio-economic backgrounds		
People with low skill levels		
Migrants	X	
People with disabilities	X	
People with health and mental health challenges	X	
Younger people	X	
Older people	X	
Other		

Ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable groups can thrive

Q32. Can you provide any further information about the way in which policies for career development in your country support vulnerable and disadvantaged people? [Up to 300 words]

No Response

Q33. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights into the way that your country's career development system supports vulnerable and disadvantaged people. [Up to 300 words]

https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/our-work/new-zealand-disability-strategy-2026-2030
https://www.myd.govt.nz/
https://www.officeforseniors.govt.nz/better-later-life-strategy/action-plan
https://retirement.govt.nz/
https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/our-strategies-and-programmes/supporting-people-from-overseas-to-settle-in-new-zealand/settlement-information/
https://www.cab.org.nz/find-a-cab/migrant-connect


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