



TEU

TERTIARY EDUCATION UNION
TE HAUTŪ KAHURANGI

Submission of

**Te Hautū Kahurangi | Tertiary Education
Union**

to the

Ministry of Education

on the

Orders in Council Industry Skills Boards

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CONTACTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Te Hautū Kahurangi | Tertiary Education Union (TEU) welcomes this opportunity to respond to the *Orders in Council of the Industry Skills Boards*.
- 1.2. The TEU is the largest union and professional association representing 12,000 academic and general/allied staff in the tertiary education sector (in universities, institutes of technology/polytechnics, wānanga, private training establishments, and rural education activities programmes).
- 1.3. The TEU actively acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the foundation for the relationship between Māori and the Crown. We recognise the significance of specific reference to Te Tiriti in the Education Act and the emergent discourse resulting from this. We also accept the responsibilities and actions that result from our nation's signing of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 1.4. The TEU expresses its commitment to Te Tiriti by working to apply the four whāinga (values) from our *Te Koeke Tiriti* framework as a means to advance our TEU Te Tiriti relationship in all our work and decision-making – with members and when engaging on broader issues within the tertiary sector and beyond – such as our response to the *Draft Tertiary Education Strategy*.

Tū kotahi, tū kaha – We are strong and unified; we are committed to actions which will leave no-one behind; we create spaces where all people can fully participate, are fairly represented, and that foster good relationships between people.

Ngā piki, ngā heke – We endure through good times and bad; we work to minimise our impact on the environment; we foster ahikā – the interrelationship of people and the land, including supporting tūrangawaewae – a place where each has the right to stand and belong.

Awhi atu, awhi mai – We take actions that seek to improve the lives of the most vulnerable; we give and receive, acknowledging that reciprocity is fundamental to strong and equitable relationships; and we work to advance approaches that ensure quality public tertiary education for all.

Tātou, tātou e – We reach our goals through our collective strength and shared sense of purpose, which are supported through participatory democratic decision-making processes and structures.

- 1.5. Our response to the *Orders in Council of the Industry Skills Boards* stems from our commitment to the whāinga expressed above and our wish to see these enacted in the tertiary education sector and in our society and communities.

2. PREAMBLE

- 2.1. The process behind seeking feedback of 'key stakeholders' on Orders in Council with the two concurrent processes of feedback: Industry Skills Boards and Polytechnics, has been frustrating and has not met expectations of the service delivered by the public service, through the Tertiary Education Commission or the Ministry of Education.
- 2.2. The feedback process has explicitly excluded the TEU from providing feedback, despite the TEU being a key stakeholder, within workplaces in the Workforce Development Councils, and in the broader Vocational and Educational Training system.
- 2.2.1. The TEU understands that some industry stakeholders failed to be consulted, and the 4 day timeframe for response was also insufficient for the leadership teams of the Workforce Development Councils.

3. Feedback

- 3.1. We acknowledge it is positive that the draft order in council for the Industry Skills Boards has a high focus on industry including employer and employee engagement, and the need for advisory groups.
- 3.2. There are significant concerns about the financial viability of these eight organisations and the ability to authentically engage with industry as well as what was promoted as the core functions. Instead of eight organisations, a different structure may be able to bring together shared services and technical expertise that does not need to be replicated within each structure.
- 3.3. The new system will be under-resourced. There are concerns that management and leadership structures will be absent initially. Relationships with TEC, NZQA, MOE may be lost.
- 3.3.1. We recommend that the Orders require the Tertiary Education Commission and the Ministry to ensure adequate funding for all statutory functions, including WBL, so that ISBs are not structurally underfunded from the outset.

3.4. The representation of the ISBs require a balance of staff, union representatives and industry. The representation system being presented is at odds with a requirement of the new Industry Skills Boards to ensure they are responsible for governance. For example, there are perceived conflict of interest by those on EAGs who represent industry associations vs the rest of the industries.

3.4.1. We believe that industry engagement must extend well beyond employers and peak bodies. Effective engagement requires the inclusion of unions, professional associations, learners, Māori and Pacific communities, and other equity groups. Giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi is essential, with iwi and hapū having a direct role in shaping industry training. Without these perspectives, advisory groups risk privileging employer interests over those of learners, workers, and communities. Unions, in particular, play a crucial role by representing the collective voice of workers, offering insight into training needs, workplace safety, and the realities of how qualifications function in practice.

3.4.2. To address these risks, the Orders should set minimum engagement standards, require co-design and culturally grounded practices, and mandate the publication of engagement outcomes, while ensuring adequate resourcing for industry engagement and qualification work.

3.5. Industry representation requires decision-making that is for the whole industry, not just those that are directly represented.

3.6. We support the principle of including clear obligations for ISBs to work collaboratively with each other, providers, NZQA, and occupational regulators. Collaboration is essential to avoid duplication, address cross-sector issues, and deliver coherent outcomes for learners and industry.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1. The TEU has taken this opportunity to provide feedback, even when we have been specifically excluded.

4.2. We urge the TEC and MoE to review how this round of feedback was conducted. We are concerned the feedback sought has been selective and is unrepresentative of each industry that will form a part of the Industry Skills Boards, or who have formed a part of the Workforce Development Councils.

4.3. The future Industry Skills Boards will be under-resourced, their governance structure is set up as a representation structure that may miss the strategic nous

required for a whole of industry approach. We need to remind the decision-makers that these are *governance* bodies.