



New Zealand Nurses Organisation

Submission to the Skills Strategy Programme Office

on the

New Zealand Skills Strategy 2008

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) thanks the Skills Strategy Programme Office for this opportunity to comment on the New Zealand Skills Strategy 2008 discussion paper.
2. As the leading professional body and nursing union in Aotearoa New Zealand representing over 41 000 nurses, midwives, kaimahi hauora, students, health care assistants and other health professionals in the public and private sector, NZNO has a strong interest in the development of a skills strategy which integrates education, training and employment goals.
3. NZNO supports utilising the expertise of education, union, government and industry agencies to align training with workplace and workforce needs and aspirations. We note that similar cross-sectoral approaches to maximise productivity, efficiency and worker satisfaction are happening in the health sector, for example with the Tripartite Agreement between District Health Boards, the Council of Trade Unions and the Ministry of Health.
4. NZNO agrees that a unified skills strategy offers opportunities for innovation, and that it is necessary to respond to and plan for current and future workforce needs. There are risks, however; for example with:
 - potential conflict with current policy and legislation, such as the current National Qualifications Framework and the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003;
 - immigration;
 - employer-led training; and
 - the equation of skills with qualifications, particularly the underlying ethos that 'climbing up the skill ladder' is sustainable or the only way to measure value.
5. While supportive of the strategy as a whole, NZNO suggests that it would be enhanced by attention being given to the consideration of:

- 'skills' in a wider context that includes attributes such as attitude, empathy, honesty, perseverance, and tolerance and ways of rewarding them;
 - employment practises, including recruitment of migrant workers, and their impact on staff retention, workplace safety New Zealand working conditions and the ethical treatment of migrant workers.
 - digital literacy and capability;
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6. NZNO also urges the SPPO to consider the labour market implications of climate change and the major transformations anticipated in production and consumption patterns. International attention is beginning to be focused on unified policies around sustainability and 'green jobs'. Though new technologies will be a factor in addressing climate change, the biggest dividends are likely to result from "greening old jobs" and investing in activities which reduce the environmental impact of production and consumption. and strongly Recent and draws your attention to the recent emphasis on and the potential potential that climate change has and will have on and desirability of 'green jobs' consie

Climate change policy has been developed in isolation from the social and labour market implications of anticipated major transformation in production and consumption patterns. Policy should be unified around sustainability.. The shortage of both skilled and unskilled workers suggests that there is need for a continuum in formal educational attainment. Many jobs require qualitative skills which cannot be taught or which are acquired through experience and are typically not measureable reable. Ways should be found to value should be valued accordingly inthere are other more appropriate requards than . Those job cannot be provided by an academic academic course is which skilled workers are not necessarily . NZNO and NZNO beleieves that NZNO ,

which can lead to unnecessary and expensive formal 'education' and set up unrealistic expectations. hat value can be measured. Many skills are not measureable, and upskilling is often a matter of broadening existing skills than reaching new levels. Healthcare assistants who are unregulated and require no formal training may nevertheless be highly skilled, yet current employment rewards based on hierarchical qualifications frameworks there are few ways of valuing and rewarding such skills. people. our *The subtext is that skill or 'value' is only added by more formal education and training and qualifications, yet do we need umpteen dozen more lawyers rather than nurses?? There are many imponderables like etc. that are just as important as skills in an employee. I would like to think that the education sector was thinking of those especially when we are reliant on a large migrant workforce - and note that it is <not> just skilled workers we are short of it is unskilled too. Really in terms of education the move is not towards longer periods at school but towards provide the right training at the right time throughout life and basically accessible anywhere – not tied to institutions. Resources would be better used not in beating unwilling kids to school but in the flexible provision of different training opportunities different age groups in different sectors as and when necessary and moving towards more aggregated and collaborative education service provision e.g. energy sector might decide they need a lot of solar water heater installers so as well as training some of those they may decide to provide short course to existing plumbers to upgrade or learn new skills. Or to use an example relevant to us – that stuff about nurses doing colorectal screening – I can't remember what it required but it was quite tricky and nurses needed to be highly and probably expensively trained . I.e. resources are being put in as and when they're needed. The key is flexibility and timeliness – there's an awful lot of inertia in the education sector and this will add to it.*

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9. The skills unrealistic expectations for continual “moving up the ladder”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. The New Zealand Nurses Organisation recommends that you:

- **note** our support for the Bill
- **note** that ,
- **agree** that

ABOUT THE NEW ZEALAND NURSES ORGANISATION

11. NZNO is a Te Tiriti o Waitangi based organisation. It is the leading professional body and nursing union in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing over 41 000 nurses, midwives, kaimahi hauora, students, health care assistants and other health professionals. Te Runanga o Aotearoa NZNO comprises Māori membership and is the arm through which our Treaty based partnership is articulated.

12. The NZNO vision is “Freed to care, Proud to nurse”. Our members enhance the health and wellbeing of all people of Aotearoa New Zealand through ethically based partnerships. Our members are united in the achievement of their professional and industrial aspirations.

13. NZNO has consulted its members in the preparation of this submission in particular NZNO staff (Management, Professional Nursing Advisors, Policy Analysts, and Industrial Advisors) and NZNO members (Colleges and Sections, Board Members and other health care workers).

NZNO POLICY AND POSITION ON THE ISSUE

14. The New Zealand Nurses Organisation **does** support the Bill.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

GOAL 1

1. Do you agree that staff retention is a problem?
2. If yes can you think of ways to improve staff retention?
3. Do you agree that often workers' skills are not fully used?
4. if yes why do you think that workers skills are not fully used?
5. What else could we do to make sure that we use workers skills?

GOAL 2

6. Do you agree that there is a need to improve the way that employers and workers think about workplace learning?
7. If yes, can you think of things that could be done?
8. What do you think are the key barriers to workplace learning?
9. Do you agree that we need to improve the way that firms and workers influence the supply of workplace learning?
10. If yes, can you think about things that can be done.

GOAL 3

11. Do you agree that there is a need to develop a shared way of describing and measuring skills?
12. Do you agree that there is a need for a broader way of describing and measuring skills that takes into account skills that are developed informally?
13. If yes what sort of skills do you think should be measured?

PROPOSED PRIORITIES FOR 2008

14. Which of these priorities do you think is most important?
15. What other priorities would be necessary to achieve our goals?
16. If you do have suggestions about other priorities, briefly describe the actions we might take to achieve them.

PRIORITY 1

17. We would welcome your views on the implementation of these actions including any examples of relevant initiatives that you have been involved with

18. Are there other actions or specific tasks you want to see included?

PRIORITY 2

19. Have you been involved in any similar initiatives? If so what was your experience/lessons learned?

20. Are there any other actions you want to see included?

PRIORITY 3

21. We would welcome your views on the implementation of these actions including any examples of relevant initiatives that you have been involved with

22. Are there other actions or specific tasks you want to see included?

PRIORITY 4

23. We would welcome your views on the implementation of these actions including any examples of relevant initiatives that you have been involved with

24. Are there other actions or specific tasks you want to see included?

CONCLUSION

15. Summary of the overall document.

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NZ Nurses Organisation

REFERENCES

Author, (Date), *Title*, Publisher, Location