



WAIHANGA ARA RAU
Construction and
Infrastructure
Workforce Development Council

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Meeting the need responsive support models in the C&I sector

AUGUST 2025





The Next Generation Of Construction
& Infrastructure Vocational Education

MARTIN
JENKINS





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What we have heard from the sector



Background and Context

**There is
appetite
for more...**

- ▶ Visible career pathways
- ▶ Mentorship programmes
- ▶ Trainer capability in cultural responsiveness
- ▶ Employer cultural capability and inclusive organisational cultures
- ▶ Support for women in the trades
- ▶ Consideration of diverse pathways to foster inclusivity
- ▶ Inclusive, safer workplaces
- ▶ Improved learner support during training and post-qualification
- ▶ Support for migrant integration and training
- ▶ Deeper mental health support



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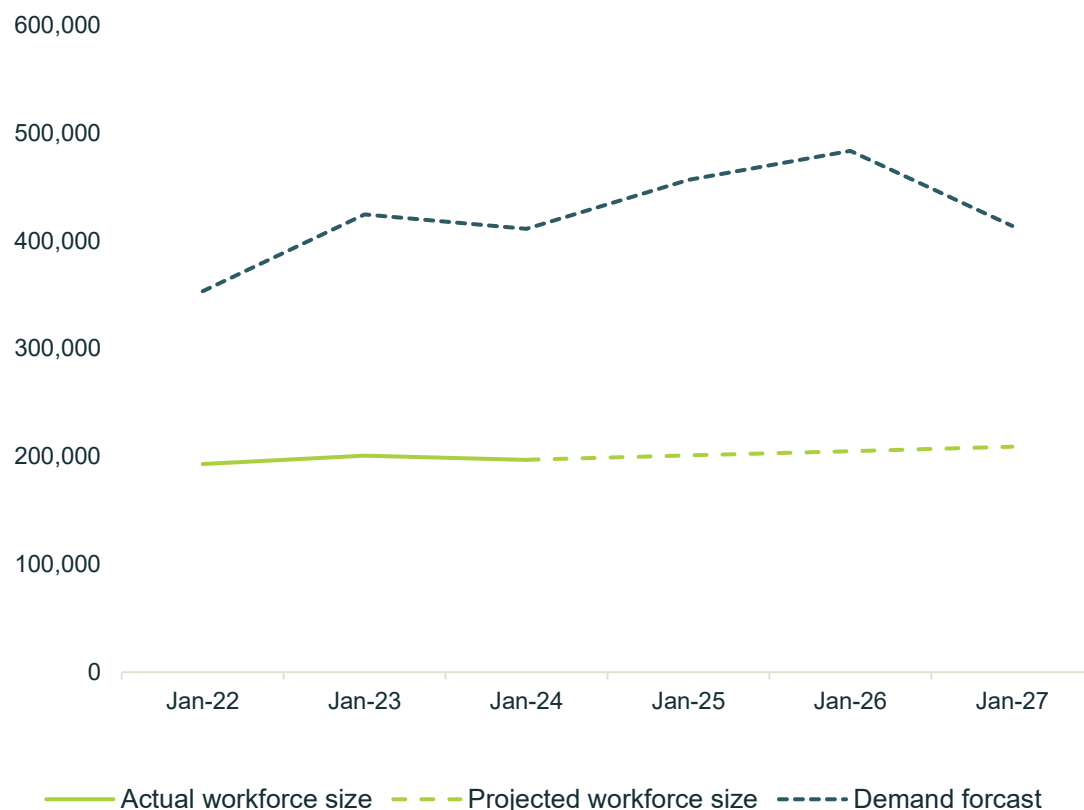
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The leaky pipeline: too few in, too many out



We need more skilled people

Workforce size compared to projected demand



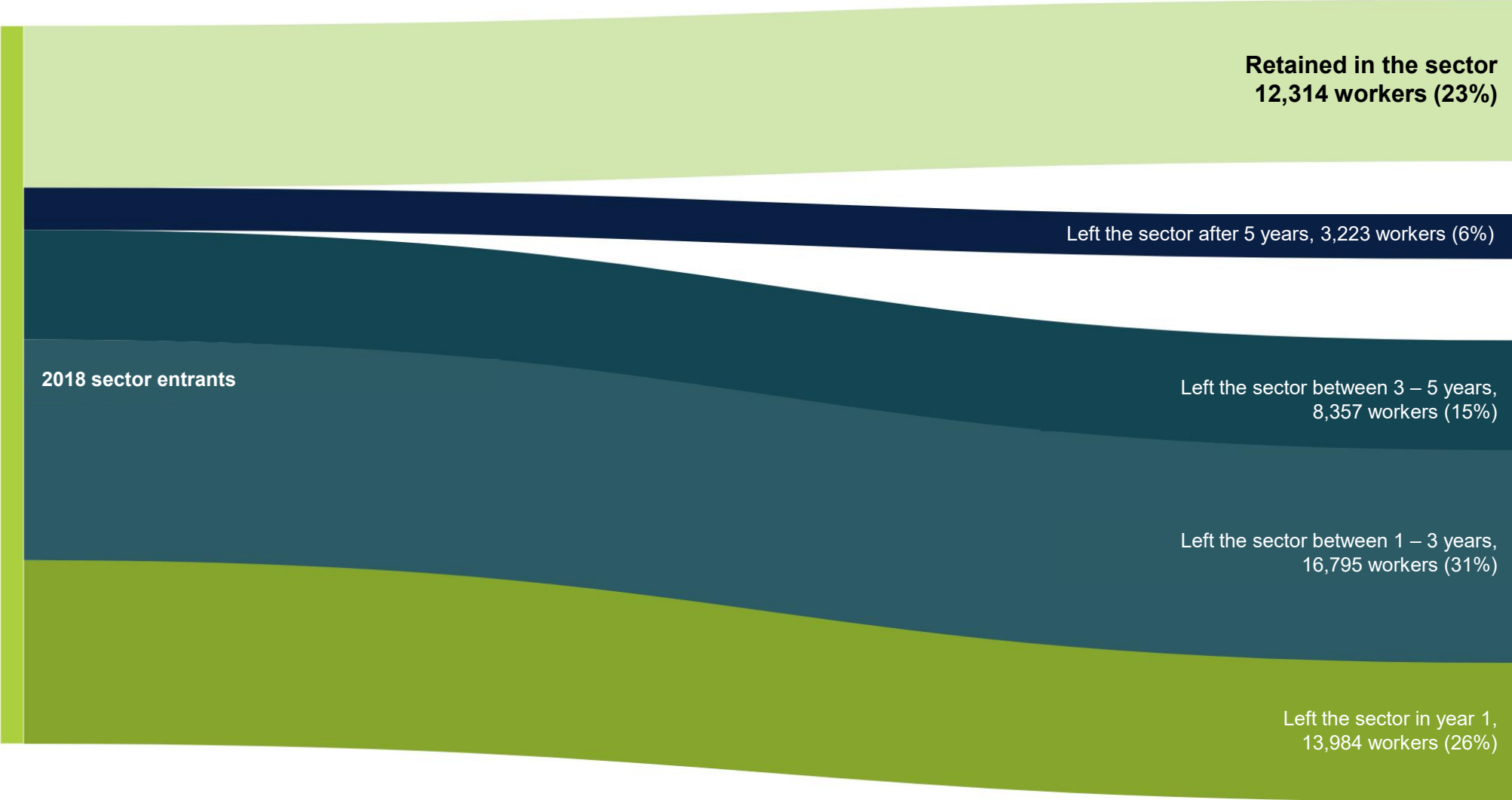
200,000 additional workers are needed by 2027

15,000 workers aged 55+ have left the sector and have not been replaced by new entrants

While enrolments have grown, apprenticeship completion rates remain low at **47%**

The workforce pipeline isn't flowing fast enough to replace workers who are leaving or retiring.

A look at workforce pathways – high early attrition



Source: Content adapted from Waihangā Ara Rau, Workforce Information Platform, 2025.



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Responding to the retention challenge



Situating our work: advancing pastoral care and needs-based support

WHY pastoral care and needs-based support matters

Persistent workforce shortages and high attrition rates

Many early-career workers leave due to a lack of structured support

Purpose of our work

Capture, consolidate, and synthesise evidence to equip industry with the tools to create inclusive and supportive workplaces now, and in the future

WHAT we are doing

- ▶ Building the case for change
- ▶ Supporting the sector to act now
- ▶ Mapping the road ahead
- ▶ Influencing the system

HOW we are working

- ▶ Evidence led
- ▶ Culturally responsive
- ▶ Informed by the sector
- ▶ Taking a behaviour change lens

A SYNTHESIS OF KEY FINDINGS

Collating the evidence to support change

HIGH IMPACT POLICY BRIEFING

*Identifying policy levers
for care that works*

*Making the case for
change*

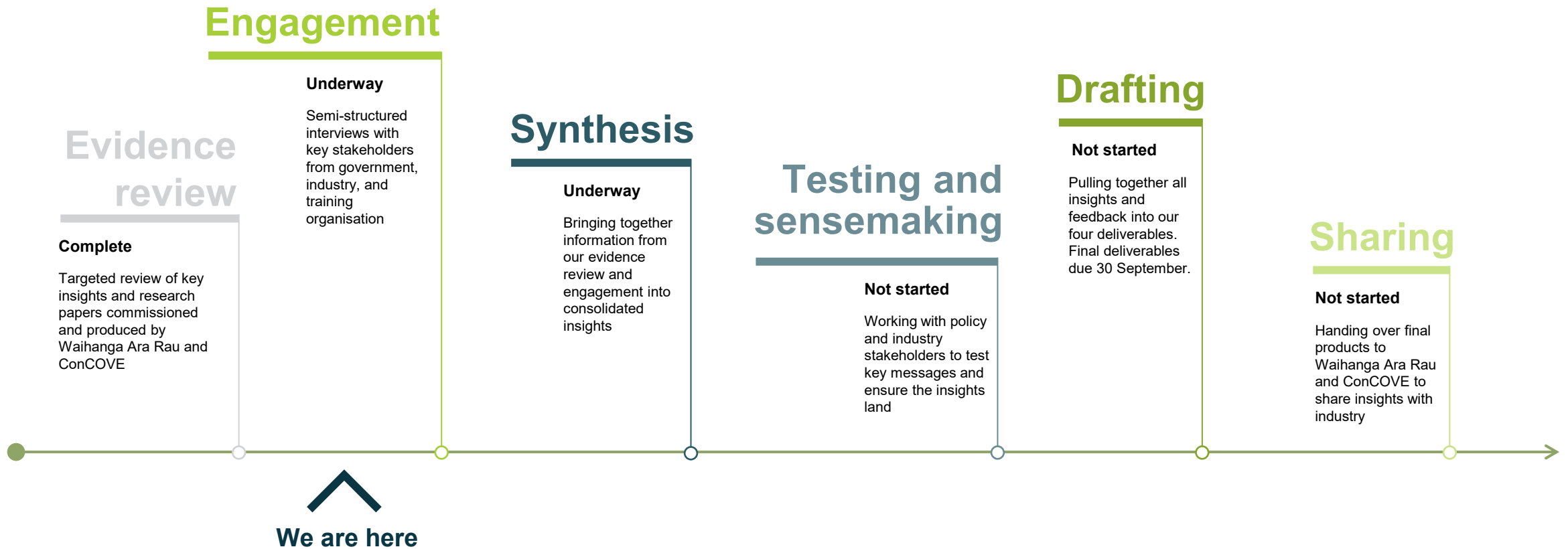
PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

*Equipping industry with
evidence-based steps
that work, right now*

GAP ANALYSIS & ROADMAP

*Enabling industry with a clear path forward
Removing barriers and building the capability to
embed pastoral care at scale*

Project process – where we are today





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Defining pastoral care and needs-based support



What is pastoral care?

Structured and intentional support systems and practices that ensure the physical, emotional, cultural, and educational wellbeing and safety of workers in the C&I sector

A working definition from the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice

Wellbeing and safety systems	Capturing worker voice	Safe and inclusive environments	Workers are safe and well
Strategic goals and plans	Listening to worker perspectives	Inclusive and tolerant cultures	Basic needs
Self review processes	Complaints processes	Strong relationship building and connection	Physical and mental health awareness
Transparency	Disputes resolution	Engagement	Proactive wellbeing and safety practices
Responsive systems		Emotional, cultural, and physical safety	



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Redefining the workplace as a site of pastoral care and support



How this might look in practice

**Keep it simple.
Make it human.
Keep it up.**



**Welcoming
onboarding,
transitioning, and
offboarding**

**Build trusted
relationships**

**Create a culture
of belonging**

**Meet people
where they
are at**

**Prioritise cultural
competency**

**Support learning
and career growth**

**Create supportive
systems**

**Formalise what
works**

The immediate why

- ▶ Improved employee wellbeing
- ▶ Reduced Absenteeism
- ▶ Employee Retention
- ▶ Enhanced Productivity
- ▶ Innovation and creativity
- ▶ Stronger Culture
- ▶ Attraction of great talent
- ▶ Better customer service
- ▶ Enhanced reputation

The long-term why

**Keep it simple.
Make it human.
Keep it up.**

Because investing in effective pastoral care and needs-based support is not only an investment in a healthier, happier, and more productive workforce, it's a strategic advantage the industry will benefit from for generations to come.

Discussion

We want to hear from you!

Scan the QR code to share your thoughts about what is need to embed pastoral care in the sector



Risks and opportunities for the sector

Identifying the risks

- ▶ Workers and learners fall through the cracks
- ▶ Priority groups may be underserved
- ▶ Wellbeing becomes compliance-driven, not care-driven
- ▶ Fragmented responsibility undermines accountability
- ▶ Missed opportunities for workforce development

Opportunities for the sector

- ▶ Shared responsibility: Position employers and industry as co-owners of wellbeing
- ▶ Embed care and support within real work settings
- ▶ Drive retention and diversity
- ▶ Improve job satisfaction, reduce attrition, and build a more inclusive workforce.

What about needs-based support?



A

Our working definition

Specific and **targeted** supports that are designed to uplift diverse groups – including Māori, Pacific peoples, tangata whaikaha – whose experiences may not be well served by mainstream or universal systems.



B

Types of need

Universal needs – things that we all need like food, shelter, and community

Expressed needs – what individuals directly voice or seek out

Perceived needs – what educators or employers observe and interpret



C

Integrating the two

Pastoral care – structured support for all; focus on wellbeing and safety

Needs-based support – targeted to underrepresented groups; responsive to diverse identities

Shared goal – responsive to learner needs; removing barriers to success and uplifting wellbeing