

POST EVENT UPDATE

DIGITAL SKILLS HUI 2019

Industry, Government and NGOs working together
to shape digital skills priorities and actions



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October 2019

This Digital Skills Forum post-event briefing paper provides insights from the Digital Skills Hui held in Wellington in March 2019. It includes the workshop findings and key observations from a full day of panel discussions, lightning talks, and interactive workshops looking to address digital skills issues.

The Digital Skills Forum is a cross Industry and Government initiative designed to bring focus to the critical issue of Digital skills required for Aotearoa's future in a collaborative framework.

THE DIGITAL SKILLS HUI

The Digital Skills Hui provided an opportunity for representatives of industry, government, NGOs, unions, civil society, the education sector and others to come together for a powerful, action-focused day to help shape priorities and next steps for the improvement of digital skills capability in Aotearoa.

Held in the wake of the Christchurch Mosque terror attacks the audience came together in compassionate solidarity. It was a cold, windy Wellington day, flights were cancelled and umbrellas turned inside out so we were thrilled to welcome over 300 delegates which demonstrated the importance of this hui.

Minister Grant Robertson opened the Hui with an update from the Future of Work Tripartite Forum plus the importance of this, and other work undertaken via the Digital Skills Forum. Positioning the pace of change, the Minister outlined the case for closing the digital divide and preparing Aotearoa for a large workforce transformation.

Delegates all participated in three interactive workshops, the key summaries of those workshops are detailed in this paper. The workshop topics were:

- Preparing Aotearoa for the Future of Work
- Bridging the Gap between Education & Employment in Digital Technology
- Developing a more inclusive and diverse digital technology industry.



WORKSHOP FINDINGS

Numerous ideas and a vast amount of feedback was captured during the Hui. All of the information has been collated and will help inform recommendations to support policy work.

This summary below is from the raw workshop data as described by the participants.

Workshop 1: **Preparing Aotearoa for the Future of Work**

The sessions focused on the changing nature of work for many in Aotearoa and how we can enable and support lifelong learning and centre people in the future of work. Workshop participants then created ideas on how we could achieve these objectives.

FOCUS AREAS

Lifelong learning

- Teach these critical skills/habits (at school, or in the community).
- General support of lifelong learners.
- Provide opportunities to upskill/retrain on the job.
- Support retraining or upskilling through career advice.
- Micro-credentialing and encourage unconventional education.

Centering people in the Future of Work

- Flexible working processes that work for the person (including ensuring digital access/infrastructure).
- Giving release time for people to focus on personal development outside of work.
- Providing people time at work to build personal work development plans.
- Recognising the value of people's experiences in tech.

WHAT HUI PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED

- Industry-wide resources for employees – frameworks, guides, tools, template focusing on professional development. Maybe this could be extended to employers too?
- Industry and Government explore how to take basic skill training out of the classroom and into the community.
- Industry and Government 'codify' a set of norms for employment standards/practices including flexible working hours, on-job training, career progression.



Workshop 2: Bridging the Gap between Education & Employment in Digital Technology

This workshop emphasised the need for better collaboration between the education and employment sectors to ensure that students have the right level of skills needed that could be built on through industry experience.

FOCUS AREAS

- Better connection and collaboration between industry and government, so students are being taught the right things.
- New models of learning and gaining experience.
- Creating an environment that encourages/enables lifelong learning.
- Employers need to be better prepared to welcome new staff.
- Promoting tech as a career earlier and promote career pathways to tech.
- Using innovative tech for job experience.

WHAT HUI PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED

- Industry and Government create and maintain a single, comprehensive, career & workforce website.
- Industry and Government work together to support/create/fund the use of micro-credentials using a pool of assessors from industry.
- Industry and Government work together to better support pathways into the workforce.

Workshop 3: Developing a more inclusive and diverse digital technology industry

This workshop emphasised the need to place greater value on Aotearoa's rich cultural and ethnic diversity, especially when designing programmes related to the educational and technology sectors.

FOCUS AREAS

- Embracing real diversity at work.
- Providing/enabling lifelong learning opportunities.
- Improving measurement of diversity and understanding what good looks like.
- Providing workplace training.
- Welcoming communities programme for refugees.
- Using tech to increase awareness of diversity.

WHAT HUI PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED

- Training for staff on unconscious bias and on engineering empathy.
- Development of a baseline to measure diversity in the digital technology workforce.
- Government mandated reporting on diversity in Government agencies.



TRIPARTITE FUTURE OF WORK FORUM

In May, Victoria MacLennan and Kim Connolly-Stone (the co-chairs of the Hui) presented to the Tripartite Future of Work Ministers Forum, at the invitation of Minister Grant Robertson. Ministers, including the Prime Minister, were provided with an overview of the outcomes of the Hui and some high level recommendations. The discussion following the presentation broadened the Digital Skills Forum's focus to include further investigation into apprenticeships for digital roles and whether there is a model we could apply.

The Digital Skills Forum has been invited back to the same meeting in November where the findings of a report into internship activity and a view on apprenticeships for digital roles will be presented.

NEXT STEPS

The Skills Forum is continuing to review the recommendations from Hui participants, incorporating these into advice for our vast range of stakeholders.

The next deliverable to be released by the Digital Skills Forum will be a report on internships including recommendations on this pathway into the workforce, strengthened by the information gathered via the Hui workshops.

The Digital Skills Forum has also recently revisited its Charter and is in the process of augmenting both government agency and industry membership to reflect the broader interest that the Future of Work Tripartite Forum and others have in our work.

To keep an eye on our work please visit our website digitalskillsforum.nz
or you can email us via digitalskillsforum@gmail.com

