



association of
consulting and
engineering



Civil
CONTRACTORS
New Zealand



Te Kāhui
Whaihanga
New Zealand
Institute of
Architects

14 March 2022

Hon Grant Robertson, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure
Hon Poto Williams, Minister for Building and Construction
Hon Michael Wood, Minister for Transport
Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment
Hon Kris Faafoi, Minister for Immigration
Hon Stuart Nash, Minister for Economic and Regional Development

By email only

Dear Ministers

As Aotearoa New Zealand transitions through the border reopening steps, the infrastructure and construction sector look forward to certainty and access to the skilled workers we need to achieve the ambitious infrastructure and housing construction plans of both the public and private sectors.

ACE New Zealand, Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects, Civil Contractors New Zealand, and Registered Master Builders have worked with officials on updating the border exemption scheme as it applies to the construction and infrastructure sector, and we want to thank officials at Immigration New Zealand and the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment for their open engagement with us.

But our work is not done. A survey of our organisations' members last year showed over 3,000 vacancies across 135 firms. At that time 90 per cent of firms reported difficulty recruiting in New Zealand, with 66 per cent getting no domestic applicants. A recent survey of ACE New Zealand members shows that in the six months since September 2021 vacancies have become more difficult to fill for most job categories, with recruitment for professional engineers and technicians being particularly difficult. We are now seeing younger New Zealanders leaving or planning to leave for their Overseas Experience, and foreigners working in New Zealand opting to return home to be with

their families or loved ones. If we cannot meet these skills shortage, then projects will not be delivered on time. Something will have to give.

We are in a global market for talent. Countries across the world are using infrastructure investment to help lift their economies post-pandemic and to respond to the realities of climate change and a growing investment in low-carbon infrastructure. In this environment, opening our borders is not enough to address our skills shortage. We now need to consider how we are attracting skilled workers to Aotearoa New Zealand and retaining the skilled workers we have.

We are keen to work with the Government to find ways to capitalise on Aotearoa New Zealand's international reputation to get the workers we need. This means leveraging our competitive advantages, including the benefits of our COVID response to help ensure we attract these highly sought-after workers.

We would like to explore with you the possibility of a joint government-sector campaign to promote Aotearoa New Zealand as an attractive destination for these people to bring their skills.

We are working with officials on the immigration reset that will accompany the border reopening. Our organisations are committed to training New Zealanders and creating long-term rewarding careers, but we also need to bring in international skills if we are to deliver the infrastructure and housing the country needs.

We envisage a targeted advertising campaign that would be rolled out in countries that are important sources of workers for our industry (for example, the UK, South Africa, EU) and targeted within those countries at people with the appropriate skill sets. We also believe that there is an opportunity to leverage NZTE contacts and networks in country, including in-market promotion and job fairs.

This is an urgent initiative, given that many countries will be competing for the same skills and talent. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss this concept in more detail and to obtain your support to progress this work with your officials.

Nga mihi,



Helen Davidson
Chief Executive ACE New Zealand



Alan Pollard
Chief Executive Civil Contractors NZ

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Teena Hale Pennington'.

Teena Hale Pennington
Chief Executive Te Kāhui Whaihanga

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Kelly'.

David Kelly
Chief Executive Master Builders

CC. Judy Zhang, MBIE Construction Sector Accord