

Press Release 09.08.19: New training centre, new name, new opportunities



The Eastern Bay of Plenty's new driver and operator training centre was named, blessed and opened in Kawerau on Friday the 9th August 2019. Toi EDA Chair, David Turner, had the honour of cutting the ribbon, and Reverend Graham Te Rire shared the name gifted to the new facility, Te Ara Huringa ō Pupuwharau.

"Toi EDA and local industry have long realised that workforce availability and transportation are key constraints to Eastern Bay economic growth. So we've got stuck in alongside industry and training providers to create a facility in Kawerau to serve wider Eastern Bay of Plenty people keen to upskill or work as drivers, machine operators and logistics personnel.

"We have been working closely with central government to make this a reality and we're delighted with the support of MBIE [Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment] through both Te Ara Mahi and He Poutama Rangatahi funds.

"This has also been an incredible collaborative effort with training partners and Kawerau's Pathway to Work partners," Mr Turner said.

Toi EDA's Workforce Development Manager, Barbara MacLennan has been a key driver towards the opening of the facility.

"The facility is right in the heart of Kawerau's industrial area, where growth is already well underway. Toi EDA has partnered with three training providers, Toi Ohomai, Axiom Training and Vertical Horizontz to start with, and together they are co-ordinating a wide range of training at the facility that matches what industry and businesses are looking for.

"Programmes commence on 19 August and includes training for drivers, machine operators, confined space, and a range of mobile equipment operators required in construction, agricultural and horticultural contracting work," Ms MacLennan said.

Research by Toi EDA looks into the detailed needs across businesses and industry in the eastern Bay and provides clear insight into current and future training needs.

"We know there is a huge shortage, particularly of drivers. And we also know that businesses see that shortage getting worse in the coming two to five years. A recent survey by the Bay of Connections Freight and Logistics Group indicates that an additional 300-400 more drivers and mobile plant operators will be needed in the next 2 to 5 years."

"This facility is a way to help address that gap. Through the training, new cadetships, and mentoring programmes, we are helping enable workforce development. Te Ara Huringa ō Pupuwharau will create new opportunities for Eastern BoP people, and especially rangatahi, to step into current and emerging new roles," Mr Turner said.

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