

EarnLearn

Specialist Trades Training

Wynyard Wood House
Level 2/60, Highbrook Drive,
East Tamaki
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Submission on	The Education and Training (Vocational Education and Training System) Amendment Bill
Provided by	EarnLearn – Specialist Trades Work-Based Learning Division of Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology
Provided to	Education and Workforce Select Committee
Date	17 June 2025

Introduction

1. We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the Education and Training (Vocational Education and Training System) Amendment Bill. We are supportive of the Bill's overarching objective to enhance regional autonomy and reinstate industry leadership within the vocational education and training (VET) system.

Focus of Submission

2. This submission addresses the future of work-based training and how the Bill can better support the Government's goal of enabling an industry-led vocational education system. We advocate for a transition process that is:
 - **Led by industry**, in determining the future of the Work-Based Learning Divisions currently within Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology.
 - **Responsive to employer needs**, ensuring that industries have genuine authority over who delivers work-based training.
 - **Minimally disruptive for learners**, with continuity of training and support services maintained throughout the transition.

About EarnLearn – Work-Based Learning Division of Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology

3. EarnLearn is a Work-Based Learning Division of Te Pūkenga servicing the specialist trades industries incorporating Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying, Electrotechnology, Scaffolding, Cranes, Rigging and Industrial Rope Access.
4. EarnLearn is operating as a standalone Work-Based Learning Division of Te Pūkenga, with its own organisation structure, learning management systems, resources, policies and financial reporting.

5. EarnLearn transitioned from Skills Org, a former Industry Training Organisation (ITO), into Te Pūkenga in October 2022. Unlike other Work-Based Learning (WBL) Divisions that transferred as complete entities from their respective ITOs, EarnLearn was one of seven transfers from Skills Org, whose industries were distributed across multiple receiving organisations. As a result, the transition into Te Pūkenga did not constitute a full “lift and shift” of an intact operational unit.
6. Following the transition, EarnLearn was established in 2022 as a distinct Division within Te Pūkenga. This included significant recruitment to complete a full organisation structure, the development of independent digital systems and processes, and the establishment of its own operating budget.
7. EarnLearn delivers and supports apprenticeships and industry training programmes through a combination of on-job, online and off-job training. It works closely with sector reference groups and employers to ensure training is relevant, practical, and responsive to industry needs.
8. This year EarnLearn released 6 new training programmes for Plumbing Gasfitting and Drainlaying which provides for increased industry training and on-job assessment, in response to industry feedback and input. These training programmes are unique to EarnLearn and financially viable through a national approach.

Recommendation:

10. We recommend that the Bill be amended to:
 - a) Explicitly support the Government’s intent that the transition of Work-Based Learning Divisions out of Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology – be an industry-led process.
 - b) This amendment would ensure that industries are empowered to determine the most appropriate future arrangements for work-based training in their sectors.
 - c) It would also reinforce the principle that those closest to workforce needs—employers and industry bodies—should have primary responsibility for shaping and overseeing the delivery of vocational education and training.
11. This approach will:
 - a) Strengthen alignment between training provision and real-world industry needs;
 - b) Build confidence and accountability within sectors;
 - c) Minimise disruption for learners and employers by ensuring continuity and relevance of training pathways.

Overview of Submission:

12. Reflect the True Nature of WBL Divisions

The Bill should acknowledge that nine Work-Based Learning (WBL) Divisions, including EarnLearn, currently operate as standalone units within Te Pūkenga. These divisions have their own systems, staff, and budgets. Recognising this structure is essential to remove complexity from the transfer and support the continuity of service to learners, who are on individual training plans, along with support being provided to their employers, and wider industry.

13. Support an Industry-Led Transition

The Government has signalled that the future of work-based training should be determined by industry. Amending the Bill to reflect this intent ensures that industries—not the Crown—lead decisions about who delivers training in their sectors. This will ensure that the unique characteristics of each industries training delivery and programmes are recognised, and continue to be sustainably delivered without disruption for learners, through the transfer and setup of the future work-based training entities.

14. Ensure Continuity for Learners and Employers

WBL Divisions have developed programmes in close partnership with industry. New programmes with new delivery systems were launched in 2025 and are already delivering results. These should continue without disruption. A clear legislative commitment to continuity will protect apprentices, and employers during the transition. This includes WBL Divisions that transition into an ISB being able to continue to enrol learners to keep the programmes financially viable as the vocational education system changes are worked through over the next couple of years.

15. Enable Flexible Pathways for Transition

The Bill should allow for a range of transfer options, including the direct transfer of WBL Divisions into private training establishments (PTEs), where appropriate. This flexibility supports timely and efficient transitions that reflect the preferences of each industry.

Recommended Amendments to support Proposal:

16. Acknowledge WBL Divisions: The Bill should explicitly recognise that nine Work-Based Learning (WBL) Divisions currently operate as standalone units within Te Pūkenga and are intended to be transferred into an organisation as a going concern to provide industry two years to decide the future of work-based training for their industry.

17. Support Continuity: The Bill should ensure that current WBL programmes—developed by WBL Divisions, with and for industry—continue without disruption to provide for continuity of training and services to meet workforce skills needs.

18. Clarify Intent in Key Clauses:

- Amend the General Policy Statement (Page 1) to reflect that the transfer of WBL Divisions will be industry-led, not Crown-led.
- Update (Page 2), to include the full transfer of WBL operations, staff, and learners into successor organisations, as determined by industry.

19. Enable Industry-Led Decision-Making:

- Amend Schedule 1 to allow industry to decide the future of WBL Divisions, including the option for a direct transfer into a private training establishment (PTE) from New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology.

20. Update Definitions and Transition Planning:

- Update Clause 127 to define “successor organisation” as an industry skills board or Private Training Establishment.
- Update Clause 131 to ensure transition plans include the full transfer of WBL programmes and related assets to successor organisations.

21. Remove Crown Control Over Enrolments:

- Delete Clause 155 (1)–(3), which gives the Crown control over new trainee enrolments. This contradicts the Government’s stated intent for an industry-led transition.