

**Media Release
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New Zealand's Association of Registered Hairdressers' (NZARH) Chairperson, Maureen Bowring, said the proposed vocational education reform would have serious implications for hairdressers across the country.

"The hairdressing industry have a long history of apprenticeship training - only last year we celebrated 50 years of hairdressing apprenticeship training in New Zealand".

Under the proposed changes, the government would reform the current vocational education system. This would result in all Industry Training Organisations being disbanded and the facilitation of apprenticeship training moving to providers.

"Employers and apprentices tell us the current system of apprenticeship training, managed by HITO (NZ Hair and Beauty Industry Training Organisation), is working well. We do not currently have any managed apprenticeships run from polytechnics as our industry does not want them.

"Making a national polytechnic responsible for managing the workplace training for all industries may not work as well as the current system where HITO ensures individualised training plans and support for trainers and apprentices.

"The current institutes and polytechnics are not currently set up to provide training that is fully based in the workplace and we have concerns about how quickly a new institution would get up to speed on this," says Ms Bowring.

Hairdressing businesses range from large national chains to small-town salons. They all need to have their say on training and feel like they are represented.

"Everyone has a need for hairdressers and our association promotes qualified professionals. As it stands, apprenticeships are offered across the country, making them accessible for our learners. We want to make sure this continues.

"Our needs are quite different to employers in some other industries and the whole point of setting up the ITOs in 1992 was to ensure training that was responsive to our specific industries", says Ms. Bowring.

The number of hair and beauty apprentices have increased by 26% over the past two years and NZARH represents employers, apprentices and practicing professionals across the industry.

Ms Bowring says, "Another concern for us is that the new Industry Skills Bodies may not allow for the same level of input from employers as the current ITO Board, which includes elected representatives from our industries".

NZARH is encouraging their members to provide written feedback directly to the Government.

"We do support some reform to vocational education, however we want to ensure that what is not working well is not fixed at the expense of what is working well".

For more information contact:

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