

### Increased sick leave

On 24 July 2021 [sick leave](#) under the Holidays Act increased from 5 to 10 days per year. Employees whose sick leave anniversary date (usually 6 months after they started work) fell on 24 July 2021 or thereafter, get 10 days for the following 12 months.

Up to 10 days of unused sick leave can be carried over to a maximum of 20 days in total at any time.

### New leaders pick up the tools to help fix skills shortages

The six new groups tasked with bringing together industry and vocational education providers now have both the tools and the leadership to get cracking, [Education Minister](#) Chris Hipkins says.

“The job of these councils will be to set skill standards, help industry achieve greater influence over what and how training is delivered and play a leadership role for their industries. Future planning will be a critical part of their role. Ensuring our training providers are offering the right courses, to get the right people graduating with the right skills to address our country’s skill shortages.

“This includes meeting the needs of IT, engineering, primary industries, building and construction and many other industries where industry currently finds recruitment difficult.”

The WDCs will moderate assessments against industry standards and, where appropriate, set and moderate assessments at the end of a qualification. “The backing and support of industry is a foundation of the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) programme,” Mr Hipkins said.

“I am delighted by the enthusiasm of industry leaders and innovators across the country who have put their hand up to be a part of this important piece of work to transform our vocational education system for the future.”

Every industry is covered by one of the six Workforce Development Councils.

Note: The second tranche of appointments to the Services WDC are yet to be formally announced.

### Immigration Prosecutions

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) has [filed charges](#) against another employer over the use of unlawful migrant labour in the building and construction sector in Auckland. The prosecution centres on two migrant workers located at a Tamaki building site on 27 April who were working in breach of their visa conditions.

A company director faces two charges under Section 343(1)(a) of the Immigration Act for aiding and abetting the workers to be employed in breach of their visa conditions. The penalty for such an offence is a prison term of up to seven years, a fine not exceeding \$100,000, or both.

The employer company also faces two charges under Section 350(1)(a) of the Immigration Act for allowing a person to work knowing they are not entitled to do so. If convicted, an offender can be fined up to \$50,000.

Acting Deputy Head of Immigration, Stephen Vaughan, says the charges reflect the gravity of the offending.

“It is not acceptable for employers to flout immigration laws in this way, and these charges show this type of offending won’t be tolerated. INZ must protect such workers, who are at a higher risk of exploitation, and also support a fair labour market. Employers who don’t follow the rules disadvantage those who do, and it’s important we ensure there is a level playing field” Mr Vaughan says.

The defendants are due to have their first appearance in the North Shore District Court on 2 August 2021. INZ will not be naming them ahead of their first appearance.

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