

Flexi-wage subsidy

The [Government](#) has announced that it is continuing its flexi-wage subsidy to employers. According to a press release from Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment –

- 20,589 people supported into jobs through Flexi-Wage
- 37 per cent of participants identified as Māori, 13 per cent Pacific
- 88% of those on benefit for 2+ years at referral are current, completed or finished early and are not currently on benefit.
- 2478 participants (12 per cent) have a health condition, injury or disability
- Over 3,000 people with children have been supported by Flexi-wage.

The following information from [Work and Income](#)'s website summarises the scheme.

Flexi-wage is one of the ways we're supporting more New Zealanders into work, by helping you hire staff and getting them the skills needed to do the job. There's a wage contribution, as well as training and ongoing support if it's needed.

Who can get it

You may be able to get Flexi-wage for someone you hire if:

- they meet the 'Who can get it' criteria outlined in [Flexi-wage job seeker information](#)
- the position is ongoing and will continue after the subsidy has finished or is for a fixed-term project that benefits the community or environment and will help the job seeker gain the skills to get into work once it's finished.
- you pay at least the minimum wage for the job
- you haven't dismissed anyone to make this position available.

Contact us about Flexi-wage before making jobs redundant. You may be able to get support to upskill an employee into a temporary job.

What you can get

We can help you find suitable staff. We'll discuss whether you can get Flexi-wage for them.

We'll talk with you about what support the person needs to get the skills needed for the job.

Depending on how much support they need, you may be able to get a wage contribution for:

- 24 weeks, at \$276 a week, totalling \$6,624 (GST inclusive), or
- 36 weeks, at \$276 a week, totalling \$9,936 (GST inclusive).

There's also training and ongoing support if it's needed. We'll work this through with you. If the person has complex or specific needs we may be able to help further.

If you have a project that benefits the community or environment, you may be able to get Flexi-wage - Project in the Community.

The Flexi-wage process

We can help you find suitable staff, and talk to you about whether you can get Flexi-wage for them.

We'll need to check that both your business and the person meet the criteria for Flexi-wage. Once we've checked you both meet this criteria and you choose to hire them, we'll discuss with you the amount of wage contribution, the duration of this, and any training and ongoing support if it's needed.

We'll then draft up a contract outlining these details and email it to you. To get Flexi-wage underway, you'll need to complete the contract and email it back to us along with proof of your bank account number.

What happens next

While you're getting Flexi-wage, we'll:

- contact you regularly to see how things are going
- send you a claim form to complete every four weeks.

We'll make sure you know how to claim the Flexi-wage every four weeks.

ACC campaign for Maori

ACC has launched a campaign called Kia Mahea Kia Puawai (Making it clear so we can flourish). It's a by-Māori, for-Māori approach, designed to share practical information about services and support available to whānau when they are injured. The following excerpts from the Agency's website detail some of the more important points.

Our research tells us that Māori are less likely to seek our help for minor injuries and overall have lower claim rates. We also know Māori are 2.5 times more likely to experience a serious injury, but 25 percent less likely to make an ACC claim. We acknowledge we can do more to ensure Māori who experience an accident or injury can access better services through ACC.

"Everyone in Aotearoa is covered by ACC if they're injured, whether they're working, unemployed or retired," says Michelle Murray our Tumu Pae Ora. But significant barriers mean that not all New Zealanders have equal access to ACC's services. Māori are 25 percent less likely to make an ACC claim.

"This inequitable situation doesn't sit right with ACC, and we are committed to changing it. We acknowledge this inequity. We have set the stage for increased trust and meaningful change – a new chapter in ACC's relationship with Māori that has already begun."

Addressing the barriers

In addition to awareness, there are also a range of barriers ACC needs to overcome to support Māori in seeking the available help following an injury. These include improving access and knowledge around what support is available.

Through this campaign, we want to ensure Māori are aware of all the support they are entitled to access when they are injured. It's designed to highlight the impact of an injury on whānau and wider community, and to seek help, rather than 'tough it out'.

The call to action, developed with the research insights is – Don't tough it out, and get help.

Improving awareness so Aotearoa knows how we can help

The foundation of our public awareness engagement approach was a research insight in 2019. It showed that half of New Zealanders and almost 60 percent of Māori had low awareness of ACC's role and services.

This means many people were likely to be missing out on the help they needed following an injury. This ultimately impacted on health outcomes.

How we will be telling this story

Through this campaign we are hoping to improve Māori access, experience and health outcomes. The campaign has been developed through a collaborative by-Māori, for-Māori approach. It is based on research insights.

The content has been created in collaboration with and features D'Angelo Martin. He is a well-known Māori journalist, writer, actor, comedian and social media influencer. The content is designed to resonate with Māori with an authentic Māori voice. It is relatable, humorous and develops an emotional connection.

Our campaigns are making an impact

Our research shows that our engagement campaigns are making a difference. Over the last two and a half years, over one third of New Zealanders have seen our campaigns. This amount of recognition is twice the government campaign benchmark with a similar media spend.

Those who see our campaigns feel more positively about us and when we're in market we lift awareness across our service offering. We want to continue to improve Māori access, experience and health outcomes.

This article is brought to you by AdviceWise People, who provide WGANZ's free employment helpline 0800 692 384. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the article, please call Philip or Anthony.