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### **SKILLS – THE EMPLOYMENT CURRENCY OF THE FUTURE**

*Nau Mai Te Ānamata Tomorrow's Skills*, the latest research report produced by Ōtautahi based Māori future-makers, Tokona te Raki has two very clear messages – firstly, skills are fast becoming the number one determinant for employers; and secondly that Māori will make up an increasingly large portion of Aotearoa New Zealand's workforce in the years ahead and as such must be equipped with the skills and tools the future will demand.

“What the future of work data is telling us is that interpersonal or human skills are the currency of the future. These are often referred to as soft skills. They are transferable and when recognised by employers can result in higher pay levels earlier on in your career,” says Hinepounamu Apanui-Barr, Tokona te Raki, Rangatahi Researcher.

“This is such a massive leap forward in creating more equitable futures. Traditionally it has been hard to get a decent job, particularly for rangatahi Māori as there has been so much attention paid to qualifications and the higher the qualification you have the better the job, and the salary. It's a really unfair approach given not all rangatahi have the same opportunities to go on to further study and get qualifications – it's just yet another barrier that gets in the way of rangatahi being empowered to fulfil their dreams and life aspirations.”

Minister of Māori Development, Hon Willie Jackson says, “The report highlights the urgent need to shift the focus from jobs and qualifications to a focus on skills if we are to meet future demands. Māori will make up an increasingly large percentage of the workforce, therefore it is essential that rangatahi are equipped with the tools and the right settings are in place to maximise opportunities – the future of work is Māori.

“This skills-based approach will increase employment opportunities and help create more equitable futures for Māori, rangatahi, pakeke and kaumātua alike.”

The data shows that the skills that people have traditionally relied on are not necessarily the ones they will need in the future. As smart machines increasingly take over many of the more manual and routine aspects of jobs, enterprise skills e.g., communication, teamwork and problem-solving will become much more important.

“It’s a fact, the future of work is changing at an increasingly alarming rate, and even more so in a world dominated by COVID-19. Over the past two years we have seen industries brought to their knees, others pivoting to a work from home culture, and an exponential rise in the development of new technologies that means it is now possible to work from anywhere in the world.

“As we look to the future there is a need for agility, adaptability, and shifting mindsets if we are to build sustainable and resilient career paths”, says Dr Eruera Tarena, Executive Director, Tokona te Raki.

The catalyst for the research stemmed from the initial devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, and the determination to change the narrative to give those most affected hope for a better and more equitable future.

“Early on in the pandemic the data painted a really gloomy picture of the future, however increasingly there is now, way more optimism and with a sharp focus on upskilling to ensure we have a future fit for purpose workforce ready to take up the opportunities that will come online,” says Apanui-Barr.

“I commend Hinepounamu and the team at Tokona te Raki for their mahi to deliver *Nau Mai Te Ānamata: Tomorrow’s Skills*. This is excellent work, and I look forward to continuing to support and work with the brilliant team at Tokona te Raki,” says Minister Jackson.

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### **About Tokona te Raki**

We are a team of Māori future makers based in Ōtautahi who use social innovation to achieve equity in education, employment, and income for all Māori within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā, and beyond.

We unweave broken systems and imagine new horizons to drive systemic change and empower rangatahi to enable long-term transformation. We imagine a world where all Māori are inspired by their futures, confident in their culture, prosperous in their careers and succeeding as Māori.

<http://www.maorifutures.co.nz>

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