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# **Building capacity in industry training research: Meeting stakeholder needs**

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# Introduction□□□□□ and background

- **Considers:**
  - » Funding steered focus on end-user research
  - » ITOs as emerging lead bodies in education and training
- **Purpose:**
  - » Outline current productive research relationships, examine their potential to benchmark
- **Core theme:**
  - » Collaborative relationships are full of possibilities

# Case Study

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- **Considers:**

- » **the advantages gained from a partnership approach between the University and an ITO;**
- » **how the research projects inform the practice of both the University and the ITO;**  
**and**
- » **how this type of partnership approach, in regard to research, can build capacity within ITOs in relation to their leadership role.**

# The tertiary reform process (The underlying narrative)

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- **Three phases:**
  - » Residual labourist (c1987 to late 1990)
  - » Neoliberal (late 1990 to late 1999)
  - » 'Third way' (late 1999 to present)
- **Key point:**
  - » Each phase linked to industrial relations policies

# Present (third way) approach

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- **Characterised by:**
  - » **stronger steering mechanisms,**
  - » **reinstatement of a measure of tripartism,  
and**
  - » **a measure of understanding (unfortunately  
sometimes quite limited) of the wider  
social context of skills development and  
application**

# The wasted decade: ITOs 1992 to 1999

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- **Initially intended (by Labour) to provide industry leadership**
- **But under neo-liberal ITA (1992), linked to ECA:**
  - » hampered by a lack of strategic policy direction
  - » framed by market model of demand and delivery
  - » ad hoc with 'industry' coverage ill-defined
  - » Voluntarist: mixed employer support
  - » often unrepresentative and
  - » approach to learning overly influenced by 'new' human capital notions of skills/knowledge as a private good
- **Role:**
  - » primarily curriculum design, writing unit standards, overseeing delivery

# The current (post-1999) context

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- **By end of 1990s, widespread recognition that market model had failed. Labour's 1999 manifesto foreshadowed:**
  - » More directive approach
  - » Greater reliance on legislative based regulation or semi-regulation
  - » Promotion of a more collaborative, partnership model
  - » Linked to restoration of a more tripartite IR system
- **Key *directive* measures include:**
  - » Education (Tertiary Reform) Amendment Act 2002.
  - » Formal adoption of a Tertiary Education Strategy (TES).
  - » Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities (STEP)

# STEP 2005-2007

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- **Signals that development phase is over**
- **Secure shifts in priorities eg quality**
- **TEOs to have distinctive roles**
- **Funding:**
  - » based on profiles
  - » linked to contribution to social and economic development
  - » TEOs must demonstrate ability to meet targets or face funding cuts.
- **Emphasis on role of research contributing wider social/economic goals**
- **New (strategic leadership) opportunities for ITOs**

# Research, funding and the PBRF

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- **Performance Based Research Fund, a steering mechanism introduced in 2003, represented first fundamental shift in University funding since the early 1990s**
- **The process part of the TES, particularly relevance and quality**
  - » **Relevance key term as research that is collaborative and focused on end-user needs is rewarded via the PBRF and the Charter/Profile**
- **University staff are encouraged to seek research partners and to pursue externally funded projects to boost income**

# Role of ITOs: Too ambitious?

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- Industries often remain ill-defined
- Patchwork coverage with overlaps
  - » Too many ITOs?
- Employer participation remains voluntary
  - » Still low level of employer commitment
  - » Even where employer participation high and level of commitment strong, doubts remain about the *immediate* capacity of ITOs to exercise strategic leadership
- Reinjection of union input limited
  - » also raises *serious* capacity issues
- Are TEC (and Dept. of Labour/Ministry of Education) up to the task?

# A positive story

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- **Food and Beverage Sector Taskforce.**
- **Skills Working Group (of taskforce).**
- **Reports**
  - » offer strategic direction.
  - » bring together work undertaken or in progress
  - » but, also highlight research needed and (implicitly) the high levels of resourcing that is required
- **An exciting possibility: links with CTU's workplace learning representatives project.**

# Case study

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- **Team has long record of work in dairy manufacturing, mainly sponsored by DWU**
- **Commissioned by NZITO to undertake research**
- **Completed:**
  - » **Demographic profile of trainees (2004)**
  - » **Impact of labour market trends on industries covered by ITO (2006)**
- **Links to:**
  - » **series of contracts undertaken for NZ Dairy Workers' Union**
  - » **Dept. of Labour funded project on skills and high performance workplaces (Case study Fonterra)**
  - » **Work for other ITOs**

# NZITO Research: Demographic change

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- **Looked at nature of changes; eg:**
  - » **Ageing population mitigated by Maori and PI fertility**
  - » **Implications of decline in under 15 population on supply of labour**
  - » **Potential involvement of non-traditional participants has implications for training**
  - » **Major implications of significant regional differences have major implications on NZITO industries: dairy manufacturing and meat processing**

# Demographic change continued

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- **Implications on training of wave effects**
- **Implications on training of having to train/retrain older workers**

# Technological change

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- **Implications for industries and training of:**
  - » **Integrated circuit technology**
    - Widespread use of robotics anticipated
  - » **Nanotechnology**
    - Estimated that ‘nano-products’ market in food and beverage will reach \$US30b within next decade
  - » **Biotechnology**
    - Likely to lead o new products and hence new processes
- **Innovations likely to reshape labour market**

# High Performance Workplace Systems: (Some of) Our emerging ideas

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- **Require genuine co-operative approach**
- **'Worker voice' and union representation a plus**
- **Success requires high levels of trust--good faith (including supportive IR systems)**
- **Instrumental approach to learning unlikely to be successful**
- **Learning and knowledge is not 'individualistic'**
- **Need to recognise *collective* nature of workers' learning, knowledge and attributes**
- **Workers have to understand political economy of their industry**

# Benefits of partnership approach

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- **Benefits to University Researchers:**
  - » Funding
  - » Applied 'real world' teaching examples
  - » Increased collaboration opportunities
- **Benefits to ITO operations**
  - » Better understanding of trainees, industry context and the political economy that shapes them both
- **Benefits to ITOs leadership role**
  - » Forecasting without a crystal ball - impossible?
  - » Increased industry understanding regionally, nationally and globally allows for educated guesses

# Conclusions

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- **New environment offers tremendous opportunities for collaborative relationships between ITOs and research bodies (and for more collaboration on the part of researchers)**
- **Political economy of education and training critically important for researchers, ITOs & learners**
- **Also relationship between education and training policies and IR policies**
- **Possible tensions between regional approaches and industry strategies**
- **Greater trans-Tasman collaborative research could have merit.**
- **'Skills ecosystems' idea worth exploring further**