

Spada Submission to Education and Training (Vocational Education and Training System) Amendment Bill June 2025

17 June 2025

Background

Established in 1982, Screen Producers New Zealand (Spada) is a non-profit, membership-based organization representing key producers and production companies in the New Zealand screen industry. Spada's membership includes producers, production companies, post-production houses, broadcasters. The majority of its members are small to medium-sized enterprises, reflecting the makeup of the industry in New Zealand.

Spada plays a crucial role in advising the government and key stakeholders on policies affecting the screen industry. It ensures that the government is well-informed about industry matters and provides guidance when needed. This includes offering input on proposed or existing New Zealand screen production incentives, coproduction treaties, trans-Pacific negotiations, government agency arrangements, policy and regulatory frameworks (such as media regulation), and public service broadcasting.

Spada has engaged throughout the Reform of Vocational Education process. In addition to working alongside other screen industry bodies to engage with TEC and Toi Mai via hui and online communications, Spada has also made the following submissions:

- [Spada Submission: Consultation on ISB Coverage and Creation \(TEC\)](#)
- [Draft Workforce Development Plan for the Toi Pāho Above-the-Line Workforce, Te Waha o Tāne](#)
- [Vocational Education Reform Proposals](#)
- [Spada Submission on Te Wao Nui a Toi Workforce Development Plan_Below the Line April 2023](#)

Submission

The Bill proposes to amend the Education and Training Act to:

1. disestablish Te Pūkenga—New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (Te Pūkenga)
2. re-establish a network of regional polytechnics
3. establish industry skills boards (ISBs) to replace workforce development councils (WDCs).

Spada's submission focuses on the replacement of WDCs with ISBs. However, we note that an **appropriately funded, sustainable network of polytechnics** is essential as part of the delivery mechanism in the VET system.

The Bill removes the connection between Industry and Education, to the detriment of all

In the current proposal the screen sector, alongside other creative industries, has been excluded from allocation to the proposed ISBs and will instead return to an NZQA model, without any explanation provided as to why this is the case.

Historically the screen sector has been poorly served by tertiary training which has failed to meet the needs of graduates and industry alike. The training on offer was not able to align with industry standards of equipment and practices, and the model lacked the ability to be agile enough to respond to changing needs on a skills or regional basis. There was a lack of provision for work-based training models to be implemented, and Toi Mai's research highlights the overwhelming demand for screen sector training that is practical, safe, and strongly connected to industry.

The process of working with Toi Mai since the establishment of WDCs has provided the screen sector with a pathway to engage with training needs alongside an industry-led approach to the development of current and future VET needs. The Reports published support the need for change in the delivery of training for the screen sector, with pilot programmes and micro-credentials introduced under Toi Mai showing early signs of positive outcomes for learners, industry and tertiary organisations.

Spada does not support the return to NZQA for the screen and creative sectors.

Therefore, Spada DOES NOT support the current proposal to *establish industry skills boards (ISBs) to replace workforce development councils (WDCs)*.

Further disruption during transition will cause harm

The past five years have seen major disruptions to the screen sector and VET alike. However, the relationship between Toi Mai and the screen sector has been strong, and it is only just now starting to take shape, with pilot programmes and new training models beginning to roll out.

The proposals to dis-establish Toi Mai along with the other WDCs and replace them with ISBs:

- excludes the screen sector from having proper representation
- will cause further disruption; and
- will have a detrimental impact on the screen sector.

Toi Mai has undertaken extensive consultation and has key staff who are informed about the specific needs and unique make-up of the screen sector. This expertise will be lost through these proposals.

Potential for Industry Levy

The draft legislation provides for ISBs to charge fees for quality assurance functions, which WDCs cannot do, and the legislation also provides for ISBs to impose an industry levy following “adequate consultation”.

The draft does not clarify what adequate consultation would be required in an industry such as the screen sector where the workforce is dominated by individuals rather than businesses.

In an industry comprised of sole traders, freelancers and contractors working in a gig economy without guaranteed consistency of work, any additional levies or costs may affect the accessibility and affordability of creative training opportunities.

The Bill entrenches a broken VET system

The structural changes proposed in the Bill risk entrenching a broken VET system with misaligned incentives, fragmentation and a ‘one size fits all’ approach to skill development.

Past VET for the screen sector allowed the development and delivery of programmes which had little to no connection to industry and included skills and practices which did not reflect current industry standard, and as a result these programmes failed to provide for positive outcomes for graduates and industry alike.

This created a lack of value and recognition for tertiary training from those within the industry, and in a ‘word of mouth’ job market it failed to enable work opportunities for large numbers of graduates beyond their studies.

A return to institutional programme design and delivery with NZQA oversight and no industry consultation is not what the industry wants. This Bill supports a broken system, which we have spent years trying to remedy.

Throughout the consultation process, change has been predicated on the needs of “employers and employees” (as set out in Sec 369 (2)(a)). This framing fails to consider the VET needs of freelancers and contractors, with the screen sector being largely a ‘gig economy’ of sole traders and contractors this is a significant problem.

Spada strongly urges that any changes to the system must ensure all models of

employment and work can access work-based learning in the new system (i.e., go beyond traditional employer / employee models and include self-employed and other workers).

In Conclusion

Spada DOES NOT support the proposals in the Submission to Education and Training (Vocational Education and Training System) Amendment Bill June 2025 for the following reasons:

- Loss of screen industry connection and engagement with VET development and delivery.
- Further disruption to an industry which has faced numerous challenges over the past five years and needs to look to the future with confidence.
- Potential for an industry levy to create barriers to access and affordability of training for the screen sector.
- Entrenchment of a system that has already been proven to fail in its ability to adequately provide the necessary training and education for the screen sector.

Spada SUPPORTS Toi Mai’s following recommendations to further strengthen the Bill for creative and digital industries:

- To ensure all models of employment and work can access work-based learning in the new system (i.e., go beyond traditional employer / employee models and include self-employed and other workers).
- To reconsider the requirement for ISBs to have eight members to a smaller, less-top-heavy governance model – while recognising ISBs can access a range of industry expertise.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit feedback for this Bill. If you have any questions about Spada’s submission, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Nga mihi,

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