

# Apprenticeship programme gains early interest

Cameron Massey - Wed, 11 Jul 2018

MinEx has already received more than half a dozen expressions of interest in the new quarrying and mining apprenticeship programme.

Launched yesterday, the programme aims to fill a sector-wide skills shortage with a clear qualification pathway, particularly for new entrants to the industry including school leavers.

MinEx chief executive Wayne Scott says he has been approached by four companies from around the country putting forward the names of seven employees keen to further their careers.



“They’re not all quarry people, one of those that contacted me last night is a coal miner,” he says.

“It’s early days but it’s excellent we have seven people already interested.”

The programme is being introduced by MinEx and MITO, with MITO facilitating the administration and training.

## Clear track

The pathway begins with entry level units from the New Zealand Certificate in Mining and Quarrying (Level 2).

Scott says the initial stage is most suited to those fresh to the industry because it focusses on operator competencies, communication and low-level risk management.

“For a person who has been working in the sector for some time, the first stage of the apprenticeship may purely be a recognition of prior learning.”

It is expected the first part will take about seven months to complete.

From there graduates proceed to the New Zealand Certificate in Mining and Quarrying (Level 4) which will be ready for enrolments in 2019. This will be a two-year programme, which includes mandatory and elective unit standards, although Scott says some participants may be able to complete it in less time than that.

## Promotion

MinEx hopes to have between 15 and 20 participants for the initial trial beginning next year.

Scott says it is important for industry representatives to actively promote the sector and the apprenticeships.

“It’s about local operators knowing the local high school principal, going into the school with some time and talking about their sites, and make it real for the students.

“Realistically, there is nothing like someone who has done it all their life talking about their experiences to Year 8 or 9 kids.”

He says any apprenticeship scheme can only work with strong support from employers. They must be committed to supporting their learners through the training programme providing them with time off to attend the classroom training, or participate in workplace training, and pay the training fees associated with the apprenticeship.

## Keep pushing

The apprenticeship has been launched ahead of the NZ Quarry Conference in Hamilton next week so Scott can pursue those that are interested and provide more information.

“We’re going to keep driving it because one of the fundamental flaws in health and safety performance is training and competency,” Scott says.

“My view has always been if people get a broader education around quarry management then health and safety will just be part of the way they manage their business.”

He believes the programme’s popularity will only increase overtime.

“It’s going to be one of those things that will get a ground swell once the momentum starts.”