

# Strategic Training Plan 2010 - 2015



**REALITO**

The source of real estate  
education in New Zealand

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## Executive Summary

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The property industry takes in many sectors, and is a market that attracts a lot of attention. In its role as leading the advancement for education and training to this industry REAL ITO has developed a Strategic Training Plan that reflects the constant changes that occur and offers flexibility to change to reflect market conditions.

The property industry has experienced significant change in the last twelve months with the introduction of new legislation and qualifications for licensing. This is seen as a positive move for the industry and has reflected in an increase in interest from individuals to up skill in order to be compliant with the new requirements.

Overall the industry achieves a higher than average level of qualifications with 27% having gained Certificates or Diplomas and a further 15% having a Bachelor Degree or higher, (source Department of Labour employment and skills snapshot January 2010).

The majority of people in the industry act as independent contractors; this reflects in that for many new entrants to the market this is second career move. The industry demonstrates an ageing demographic and retirement rates are low, many will stay in the industry for a number of years and scale back their working week as they get older.

The property markets have been significantly hit by the recession. The slow rate of recovery has impacted, as numbers exiting the industry has increased, however from research conducted there has also been a noticeable move for new people entering the industry and with a higher level of qualification than has previously been experienced. REAL ITO currently has 693 trainees engaged on active training agreements, (over 1200 training agreements in the last 18 months) through its on job training programme; this is a positive step in this industry, as the scheme has only been offered for the last 18 months.

- The major issues facing the training provision for the Property Industry are:
- The ageing demographic and attracting younger people into the industry
- The need for specialist training in sector specific areas of property
- The need to continuously up skill industry members
- Impact of changing business demographics on training
- To increase the number of Maori and Pasifika entering careers in property
- To support tertiary education organisations through the development of common assessment tools that can be applied in their establishments

This Strategic Training Plan has been developed with industry consultation to provide a clear set of actions for both the ITO and its industry to address these issues over the next five years.

### **The scope of the plan includes:**

Offering leadership and guidance to the entire property industry and across all sector training: This is not just limited to the real estate sector and includes broad skills and labour market issues. REAL ITO will encourage ongoing participation from all stakeholders, how they can contribute will be clearly defined and changes will be made to meet the needs of economical and technological environments.

The Strategic Training Plan contains an action plan that identifies key priorities, policy around these priorities and expected outcomes to be achieved over the next five years. REAL ITO will continuously communicate with the property industry as to how it is progressing with achieving these projected outcomes.

### 1.0 Introduction

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REAL ITO's Strategic training plan reflects its role as the industry leader for education in the property sector.

Through the research conducted REAL ITO is able to develop a strategic training plan that identifies the education requirements of the industry and how it plans to address these needs over the next 5 years.

#### 1.1 The role of REAL ITO

REAL ITO is New Zealand's Industry Training Organisation for the real estate sector in partnership with REINZ as the shareholder. It develops nationally recognised qualifications for licensing and arranges for the delivery of flexible workplace training through on job training programmes. REAL ITO works across the industry to set standards for everyone entering, working in, and delivering to this sector.

The real estate sector has three levels of individual licensing and REAL ITO prescribes the qualifications to meet these licensing requirements.

The ITO is gazetted as the industry training organisation for the real estate industry. The current gazetted coverage statement is:

*Pursuant to section 5 of the Industry Training Act 1992, full recognition is given to the REINZ Industry Training Organisation Limited for a period of five years with effect from 25 July 2009 to set standards at Levels 1 to 8 on the National Qualifications Framework for the real estate industry; being the appraisal, sale and purchase, letting and leasing, property management of commercial/industrial, residential and rural properties, and businesses; and body corporate services for commercial/industrial, residential and rural properties and businesses.*

#### 1.2 REAL ITO background

In 1992 the Council of REINZ made the decision to become an Industry Training Organisation (ITO). For real estate this meant the developing of new standards of training called unit standards that were registered with the NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA). In 1996 the qualifications for licensing were developed and registered with NZQA giving real estate a national certificate and a national diploma. REAL ITO also has a quality assurance role in ensuring that the training delivered by the tertiary providers is meeting the national standards.

Traditionally real estate education and training had been developed and delivered by REINZ through correspondence. The development of unit standards meant only an accredited tertiary education provider could deliver the training. The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (TOPNZ) became that provider. The training was still delivered mainly through correspondence but classes were also held in various centres around the country by TOPNZ. Later two more providers became accredited to deliver the national qualifications. Tafe College and Unitec delivered only the salesperson course while TOPNZ delivered all the qualifications. In 2005 the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic also became accredited and now delivers the salesperson course and the national certificate.

Further to the 2002 Industry Training Act legislation, REINZ ITO LTD was formed in 2004 with its own independent board.

The new board redeveloped the qualifications for licensing and moved to become a funded ITO. On job training came out of this move forward which saw the departure from the traditional classroom based model and enabled real estate companies to have the option to train their own people in house with the support of the ITO.

May 2010 saw REAL ITO rebrand and become a stand-alone entity within the REINZ family. A new constitution and board structure are now in place that better represents the industry and allows independence of decision making in terms of skill needs for the industry.

### 1.3 Who REAL ITO represent

REAL ITO represents the entire property sector. The primary focus has been on the development of qualifications for licensing under the Real Estate Agents Act 2009. However Real ITO consults with and represents the education needs across the entire sector including property managers, and those operating in roles across all industry groups.

The future of the ITO in its role as the source of property education in NZ is to foster closer relationship across all industry sectors to identify career paths and look at ways of strengthening the industry through looking into transferrable skills and ways to bring more training into this industry sector. This will transpire in the objective to be the leader in the education solutions for this market.

## 2.0 REAL ITO Consultation

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The ITO is continually consulting with the property sector. The basis of this Strategic Training Plan comes from data collected over a period of time. Most recently qualitative data has been collected through one on one consultation with industry leaders and through online quantitative surveys with industry stakeholders.

### 2.1 Property industry overview

The property industry has undergone a substantial transformation over the last twelve months which occurred due to the introduction of Real Estate Agents Act 2008.

The Real Estate Agents Act 2008 was passed by Parliament and was given 14 months to transition into the industry. Its implementation occurred on 17 November 2009. The industry now has a better understanding around what is required in terms of licensing qualifications. The result of the Act embedding into the pedagogy of real estate qualification has seen an increased uptake in training has resulted both at entry and particularly in terms of up skilling those currently working in the sector.

The 2008 Act also has the provision for the Real Estate Agents Authority to prescribe compulsory continuing professional development (CCPD); as yet this has not been implemented.

REAL ITO recently conducted research that focused on continuing education in the real estate industry. From the results of this research some general assumptions can be made. 82.1% of participants were born in NZ; the gender balance was 54% male to 46% female. 87% of the industry that participated was over 40 and a median age was found at 54 years.

The property industry is unique in that salespeople working in the real estate sector enter into a contract for service with agents and must work for a licensed agent and as such, they are not employees. Agents are required to properly supervise and manage the salespeople, under the Real Estate Agents Act 2008.

The median period in the industry for all respondents to the survey was 7 years. This suggests that significantly fewer people entered the industry in the past two years. The data also shows that there apparently have been no more than 'replacement' numbers of salespeople moving into branch manager and agent roles.

Statistics from March 2010 show approximately 1642 offices/branches nationwide with a total of 17,050 (REAA figure 16 August 2010). Although the Real Estate Agents Authority at 16 August 2010 had issued 2,182 new licenses, since its commencement in November 2009, an overall drop in figures from 19,689 in March 2009 is evident.

Geographically branches are located right across the country including remote locations. 35% of the industry offices are small and would have 3 or less salespeople attached to the license. The change in the legislation has enabled new business models to be developed as operating in a remote location is no longer an issue under the Act, and technology will assist in this area. 45% of respondents stated online learning would be the preferred method in which they would choose to learn.

Traditionally there has been an approximate 20-30% attrition rate however the allowance of voluntary suspension of licenses enables people to exit the industry while retaining their license for the future. The economic downturn and the significant decrease in volume of sales, over the past two years have seen many either exit the industry or suspend their license.

The Real Estate Institute of New Zealand's figures indicate that July 2010 saw the lowest property sales turnover in a decade. However the main centres of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch are still showing growth on previous year's figures.

### 3.0 Objectives for accumulating data for the development of strategic training plan

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To facilitate the process of developing a strategic training plan REAL ITO identified key focus areas that it needed to obtain an appreciation of the whole property sector.

The strategic training plan must ensure that the tertiary education is being offered across the sector and it meets the requirements in line with the priorities prescribed by tertiary education strategy.

The areas of focus cover

- REAL ITO provisions
- Training initiatives
- Demographic constraints
- Industry performance

REAL ITO, through its leadership for training and education across this sector, has identified objectives that are motivators for the property industry and should be included in the strategic training plan.

- To ensure that REAL ITO is meeting the current needs of the property sectors training requirements.
- To identify the future training needs of the property sector.
- To raise awareness of careers in property, and identify how organisations can engage in ongoing training provisions for staff.
- To ensure the quality of training offered by tertiary organisations is being monitored by REAL ITO.
- To ensure the right number of people are entering and being trained in the sector.
- To identify if there is a high rate trainee termination or failure to complete qualifications/degrees and how this can be overcome.
- To determine what outcomes REAL ITO training should be delivering.
- To determine the outcomes of education and training for the whole property sector.
- The ITO assesses the preferred method of obtaining an industry contribution.
- To ensure there is access geographically to industry training for the sector.
- To ensure the preferred methods of industry training are being met.
- To determine the recruitment methods being adopted across the industry.
- To determine the rate of industry retention and if training can assist in this area.
- To gauge the level of industry provision for the recruitment of school leavers into the sector.
- To determine the opportunities available to Maori and Pacific Islanders being recruited into the sector.
- To identify ways REAL ITO can encourage a growth in the recruitment of these demographics.
- To establish the need for REAL ITO to offer a support structure to differing demographics entering the sector. To gain an understanding of what the tertiary sector is currently offering in this area.
- To find out the need for migrant induction into the property sector

- Determine how REAL ITO can be best informed as to the trends and developments impacting on the property sector.

### 3.1 Principal findings from research conducted.

The industry has indicated that there is a definite shift toward up skilling the property sector and an increased awareness of the ITO as the leaders in this field particularly around education. Many of the major groups have requested that REAL ITO develop training pathways to enable their people to up skill to the new national certificate (salesperson) through on job training. This is further to the new qualifications being introduced on July 1, which determines that for the first time there is an academic qualification that can be trained and integrated into workplace learning. Feedback indicated a definite need for specialist training, with areas identified as requiring expert knowledge

- Residential property management
- Business broking
- Auctioneering
- Rural
- Commercial and Industrial sales and leasing
- Branch Manager
- Agent
- Salesperson

Demand was also voiced for soft skill and non compliance areas some of which covered marketing, administration, sales techniques, customer service, presenting and time management. Another area that was raised by the majority of those interviewed was the need for compulsory continuing professional development in the industry. In its role as a leader in education for this sector REAL ITO will advocate on behalf of the industry to the REAA as to how this could be implemented.

Clear ideas and initiatives were heard around attracting younger people into the industry and this is reflected in the STP actions.

Methods of delivery for industry training were also expressed with a definite preference for electronic learning. This would support trainees in remote locations and would also compliment any professional development requirements that arose.

REAL ITO plans to look closely into literacy and numeracy levels across the industry over the next 2 years, and the introduction of a lower level qualification would see literacy and numeracy skills embedded into the qualifications. This would also assist in the area of ESOL where literacy levels are of concern.

Creating career pathways through qualifications was expressed as being a preference for the industry and would work in supporting better retention of staff within organisations.

It was also expressed that engagement and support at an Agent/Branch level would assist in trainees completing qualifications and encourage better mentoring from a management situation. The electronic survey sampled approximately 100 participants of the industry across all industry demographics. Whilst the topics covered were more limited questions covered a similar vein to the face-to-face consultation.

Of those that responded 49% had been in the industry for more than 8 years with only 16% having experience of 3 years or less.

59% of those that responded felt the ITO was meeting current training needs and skill gaps were felt as a requirement in specific skill areas, more knowledge around legislation and soft skills. 66% indicated that if a training programme was introduced in a specialist area that was not a requirement for licensing they would still complete it. The split between having completed qualifications via on job training and being trained through a tertiary provider was 29% on job training to 71% through a tertiary provider. This would also reflect on the length of time these participants have been in the industry and how long on job training has been an option. 50% could see a definite benefit of bringing younger people into the industry with a further 10% not giving a definitive answer.

When asked if there were any other comments that respondents would like to make, there were lots of areas that the ITO could be seen as being able to offer value. Key themes included continually up skilling the sector, help with recruiting, developments in IT and further opportunities as an industry spokesperson.

The industry feedback has assisted in the formulation of key themes to focus on for REAL ITO moving forward over the next 5 years.

## 4.0 Key Priorities for Strategic training plan

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**To ensure all the training needs of the property industry are being met.**

**To ensure the latest and most cost effective workplace training methods are being adopted**

**To ensure that REAL ITO supports priority groups and encourages the uptake of qualifications to meet the needs of these sectors**

### 4.1 Priority one

**To ensure all the training needs of the property industry are being met.**

The introduction of the Real Estate Agents Act 2008 has resulted in recognition that the property industry must upskill and maintains current knowledge in this industry sector.

As a result of a large part of the industry being independent contractors, there has been a steady turnover of labour in the marketplace. Although due to tighter financial constraints some have left the sector, new recruits have taken their place and some offering a high level of academic background. Those interviewed from an executive level were comfortable with current industry labour numbers and the natural attrition in staff turnover.

There was a definite indication that skills needed to be concentrated in some areas. Those identified as being areas where specialist training is needed were.

- Residential property management,
- Business broking
- Auctioneering
- Rural
- Commercial and Industrial sales and leasing
- Branch Manager
- Agent
- Salesperson

Work has already begun on developing residential property management qualifications from level 3 through to level 4. REAL ITO conducted consultation with Residential Property Managers with regard to the requirements around a sector specific qualification, which has received positive feedback. The qualification could be beneficial in staircasing young people into the property sector and eventually into sales or a senior property management role.

Initial consultation has also begun on developing an auctioneering qualification for calling auctions. Potentially this could be used across the wider auctioneering sector i.e. not real estate specific. Further work needs to be carried out to gain support for a wider auctioneering qualification.

Although it is difficult to meet all industry demands, especially under current funding models, all these areas require specific knowledge and REAL ITO needs to work with these individual sectors to evaluate how it can meet their needs.

REAL ITO also needs to focus on identifying the transferable or portable skills required across the property sector and how trainees can use these transferable skills to advance on their career path.

### 4.2 Priority two

**To ensure the latest and most cost effective workplace training methods are being adopted.**

Everybody wants to see value for money from training. Trainees need to see that programmes are cost effective and can add value to their career choice and government needs to see higher qualification completion rates across the industry.

REAL ITO needs to focus on the above and its in-house processes and systems to ensure practical cost effective practices are being delivered. This includes further investigation into the implementation of e-learning for trainees to more easily access cost effective training methods. REAL ITO is to ensure it is meeting the needs of trainees to help them achieve qualification completions.

### 4.3 Priority three

**To ensure that REAL ITO supports priority groups and encourages the uptake of qualifications to meet the needs of these sectors**

Currently REAL ITO offers qualifications to meet licensing regulations at level four and above. Through consultation it has been recognized that there is a need for a qualification at level two-three. This qualification would work three-fold in that it could be offered at school level as an introduction to the property industry. Across priority groups, Maori and Pacific Island communities as an introduction to managing and owning property and to encourage a better uptake into a career in the field of property from this demographic. It could also be used with ESOL learners as an introduction to the property sector in New Zealand.

**5.0 Strategic Training Plan table of outcomes to be achieved in relation to identified priorities.**

Priority	Policy	Outcome
<p><b>To ensure all the training needs of the real estate industry are being met.</b></p>	<p>Ensure the demands of sector specific industry requirements are achieved including sector specific qualifications.</p> <p>Sectors could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential property management,</li> <li>• Business broking</li> <li>• Auctioneering</li> <li>• Rural</li> <li>• Commercial and Industrial sales and leasing</li> <li>• Branch Manager</li> <li>• Agent</li> <li>• Salesperson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult industry sectors and create industry advisory groups</li> <li>• Work with REAA to create awareness and knowledge around sector specific skills for licensing.</li> <li>• Act as advocate for industry through consultation and lobbying.</li> <li>• Consult with sector advisory groups on the development of sector specific qualifications.</li> <li>• Research and develop industry sector specific qualifications, support material and assessment resources.</li> <li>• Create clear career pathways around sector specific qualifications</li> <li>• Ensure ongoing research is carried out on skill gaps to ensure industry needs are met</li> <li>• Apply for funding via the investment plan to meet the needs of industry specific qualifications</li> </ul>
	<p>Work collaboratively with industry leaders to leverage off existing in-house training systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position REAL ITO as the preferred industry training and education partner.</li> <li>• Communicate REAL ITO as the source of real estate education in New Zealand</li> <li>• Promote the benefits of the ITO across the industry in particular with middle management influencers.</li> <li>• Deliver workshops to industry to educate the benefits of workplace training</li> <li>• Support Government initiatives to up-skill the industry</li> <li>• Promote the need to up-skill at a middle to upper management level</li> <li>• Give industry assurance that in-house training will match qualification outcomes</li> </ul>

Priority	Policy	Outcome
	<p>Work in partnership with industry strategy setters, REAA, REINZ, Property Council and Property Institute</p> <p>Encourage existing individuals to up skill, increase productivity and achieve qualifications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure industry support for REAL ITO as the leader in the field of real estate education for NZ</li> <li>• Work in partnership to ensure NZ achieves its goals around economic development</li> <li>• Work collaboratively with industry leaders to strengthen the overall real estate sector, to keep at the front of market happenings and create knowledge base for trainees</li> <li>• Act together with industry leaders as a common advocate to represent industry views on training needs</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the level of STMs meet the delivery needs of the ITO initiatives</li> <li>• Ensure work place training is easy to access to enable straightforward uptake of the training programmes</li> <li>• Research e-learning system to offer cost effective assessment and support that can be accessed on a national basis</li> <li>• Promote specialist fields to offer diversification or sector specialization to existing employees</li> <li>• Develop performance measures to increase the completions of industry trainees</li> <li>• Ensure programmes are relevant through ongoing consultation across industry sectors</li> <li>• Identify existing numeracy and literacy skill levels in the industry and create a plan to fill any identified gaps.</li> </ul>

Priority	Policy	Outcome
<p><b>To ensure the latest and most cost effective workplace training methods are being adopted</b></p>	<p>Ensure REAL ITO has the knowledge base and ability to pass on the benefits to the real estate industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in IT through the integration of the Itomic system</li> <li>• Ensure ITO staff meet the skill needs of the organisation</li> <li>• Ensure ITO adopts efficient processes and systems</li> <li>• Continually look at efficiencies and areas where costs can be reduced</li> <li>• Ensure REAL ITO assessment measures meet industry requirements and are executed at marketable rates</li> <li>• Provide practical cost effective moderation systems that meet the needs of the industry.</li> </ul>
	<p>Offer the most up to date technology for trainees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and implement an e-learning system for workplace trainees use</li> <li>• Engage with industry around the benefits of e-learning</li> </ul>
	<p>Ensure REAL ITO supports trainees learning and qualification outcomes and increases credit completion rates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop systems to adequately support the needs of trainees</li> <li>• Support trainees learning outcomes through integrating achievable KPI's and effective communications.</li> <li>• Integrate trainees progress through the use of IT (Itomic System) focusing on completing qualifications within the specified durations.</li> <li>• Ensure REAL ITO is able to offer flexible solutions to support trainees to aid completions</li> </ul>
	<p>To offer leadership in the area of careers in real estate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create clear career pathways for the real estate sectors</li> <li>• Consult with industry leaders around needs for recruitment and staff engagement</li> <li>• Create recruitment portal via the website for industry utilization</li> <li>• Promote training methods that assist staff retention</li> </ul>

Priority	Policy	Outcome
<p><b>To ensure that REAL ITO supports priority groups and encourages the uptake of qualifications to meet the needs of these sectors</b></p>	<p>Create training methods that support young people entering the real estate industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with key industry leaders on how REAL ITO can encourage uptake of qualifications in the real estate industry by young people</li> <li>• Consult with education sector around the requirements of a level 2-3 qualification</li> <li>• Research and develop property qualification to be introduced at high school level</li> <li>• Consult with TEC to investigate the opportunities around integrating a property qualification as a Gateway programme</li> <li>• Educate real estate industry around the advantages and opportunities of engaging school leavers that have taken up a level 2-3 property qualification</li> <li>• Create clear career pathways for trainees to continue their qualifications in the real estate sectors.</li> <li>• Offer support to trainees and educators in the field of property qualifications.</li> <li>• Create sector advisory groups to inform on issues pertaining to younger trainees.</li> </ul>
	<p>Create training opportunities for Maori and Pasifika to enter careers in property</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with appropriate groups on the requirements of Maori and Pasifika students</li> <li>• Develop training opportunities to work with their needs</li> <li>• Create level 2-3 property qualification and show clear career pathways to encourage uptake at level 4 and above.</li> <li>• Offer support to trainees and educators around property qualifications</li> <li>• Promote REAL ITO as the leader in the field of property and real estate education in NZ</li> <li>• Develop funding streams to support training in these groups.</li> </ul>
	<p>Ensure real estate qualifications cover the needs of ESOL learners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with advisory groups on the requirements of ESOL learners entering the real estate industry</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate measures are in place to support ESOL learners and ensure their understanding of NZ real estate</li> <li>• Develop measures for better understanding of trainee's requirements.</li> <li>• Ensure ongoing research on the needs of ESOL learners</li> </ul>

**Appendix 1: Key features of the property sector**

Position	Functions	Size, trends and characteristics	Demographics industry wide
<b>Salesperson</b>	<p>The essential skills and knowledge for this role give the ability to appraise the value of property and to sell property in New Zealand. Salespeople also have the understanding of important legal requirements to ensure they have the knowledge to bring about a sale or transaction that meets a customer’s needs.</p> <p>Specialist areas cover residential, commercial, business broking, rural.</p>	<p>Definitive figures are not available in each licensing category from the REAA for 2010.</p> <p>There are currently 17,050 licensed as salespeople/branch manager/agents in the real estate industry.</p> <p>This figure has seen a decrease over the past year of approx 5,104 (since March 2009).</p>	<p>82.1% of industry participants were born in New Zealand</p> <p>54% male in industry</p> <p>46% female in industry</p> <p>87% of industry over age of 40</p> <p>Median age of industry is 54</p> <p>Median period of participation in the industry is 7 years.</p>
<b>Branch manager</b>	<p>This role requires the management of real estate projects, real estate staff, the preparation and discharge of contracts, appraisal in different real estate sectors and financial transactions including trust accounts. It requires the broad skills and knowledge base for running a real estate business</p>	<p>In March 2009 there were 1,731 licensed branch managers.</p>	
<b>Agent</b>	<p>Every real estate business must have at least one fully qualified and licensed agent. In this role you can elect to employ a branch manager enabling a focus on running the entire business. This role involves the effective management of a business ensuring all legal and compliance requirements are met by your organisation.</p>	<p>In March 2009 there were 1808 individual agents or company agent licences.</p>	