



# Retaining our People

Progress on a Food and Fibre Employer Toolkit  
Retention Pilot



Research and Insights Forum  
18 – 19 March 2025



# What we will cover today

1

Why did  
we do  
this?

2

Designing  
the Toolkit

3

Delivering  
Pilot 1

4

What we  
learned in  
mid-way  
evaluation

5

Toolkit  
iteration  
and delivery  
of Pilot 2

6

What's  
next?



# Acknowledgements – a big thank you to all who've contributed to this work so far



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## Food and Fibre CoVE

Fiona Windle  
Paul Hollings

## Management group

Kirsten Norfield  
Bridie Virbickas  
Rosa Scott  
Nicola Crennan  
Nathan Fogden  
Summer Wynyard

## Scarlatti

## Industry workshop participants

Stuart Fraser  
Kirsten Norfield  
Sarah Wright  
Jane Muir  
Joseph Brolly  
Kate Longman  
Matt Dolan  
Anthony Heywood  
Oliver Ibbetson  
Terry Copeland  
Richard McIntyre

Julie Norton  
John Henare  
Kerri Ahomiro  
Maitland Manning  
Lisa Rogers  
Lyndsey Dance  
Olivia Weatherburn  
Tracy Paterson  
Nicola Crennan  
Stuart Fraser

## Interviewees

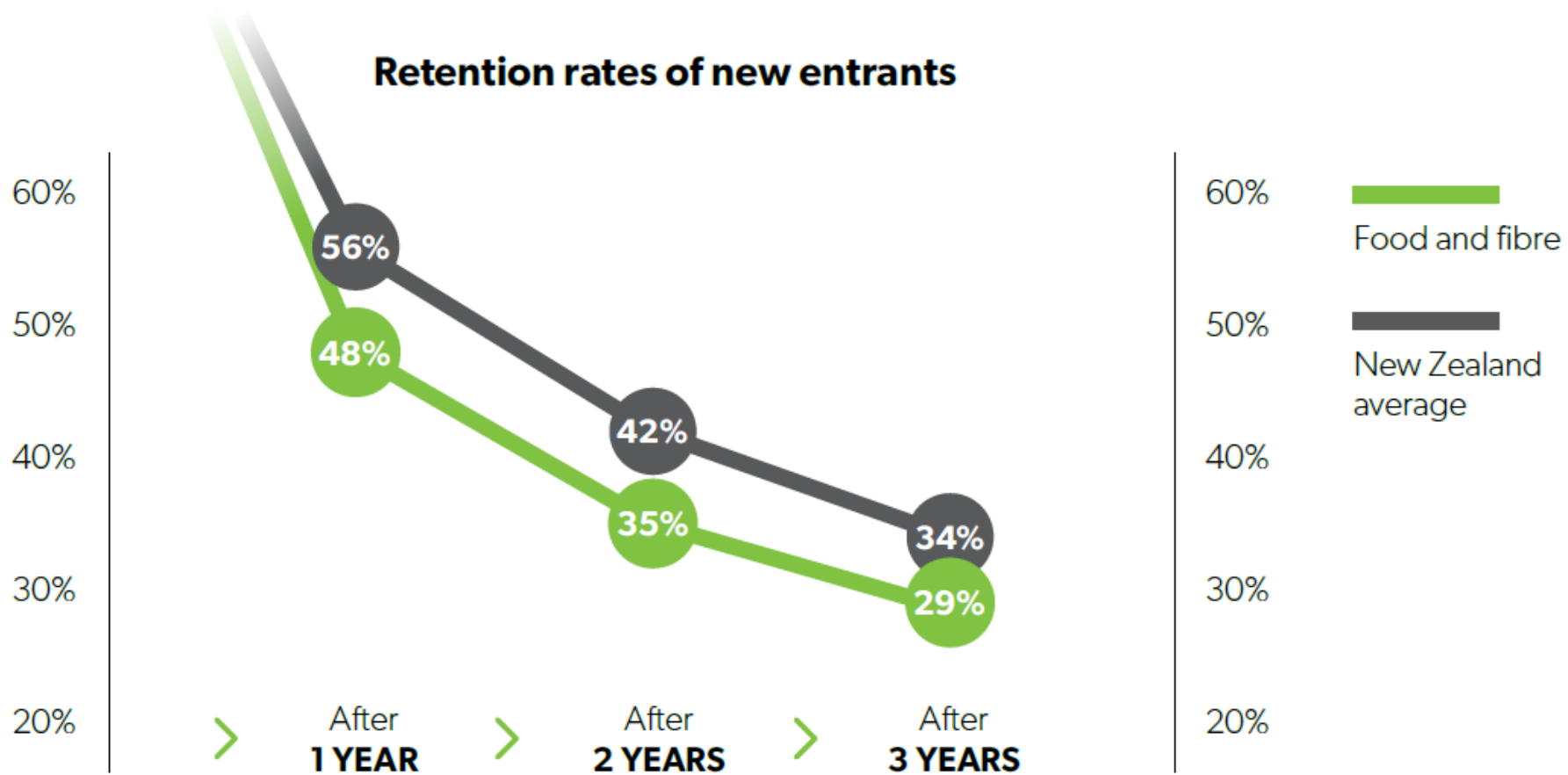
Cheyenne Wilson  
Alix Te Kere  
Grace Rehu  
Wiremu McMillan  
Karla Bradley  
Wini Geddes  
Summer Wynyard  
Hiraina Tangiora  
Ben Purua  
Kerri Ahomiro



A flock of sheep is grazing in a lush green field in the foreground. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with patches of snow under a clear sky. A green rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the text '1. Why did we develop a Toolkit?'.

## 1. Why did we develop a Toolkit?

# Retention has been a long standing issue



Food and Fibre Skills Action Plan, 2019 (Sourced from 2018 IDI Data).

# Retention has been a long standing issue

Initial research purpose:

- evaluate why workforce shortages have persisted in the food and fibre sector.
- consider what novel opportunities are available to address these challenges.

Activities:

- evaluated previous retention efforts.
- characterised reasons why people leave food and fibre sector employment within 12 months.



# Findings and implications

## Relevant findings

1. Improving **retention, particularly of first-year employees**, is an **underexploited opportunity** to address workforce shortages.
2. There are **many reasons why people leave** the sector, each with varying degrees of significance.

## Pilot opportunities:

1. Building employer capability in developing and supporting employees.
  - a. *Managing staff with mental wellbeing challenges*
  - b. *Managing Gen Z employees*
2. Mentoring / coaching new entrants to the workforce.
3. Providing tools and resources to improve recruitment.



# Questions we wrestled with

Is high turnover even something employers view negatively / as a problem?

If so, do employers recognise/believe they have a role to play in improving it?

Do employers have a lack of available information / tools to make changes?

## Research questions

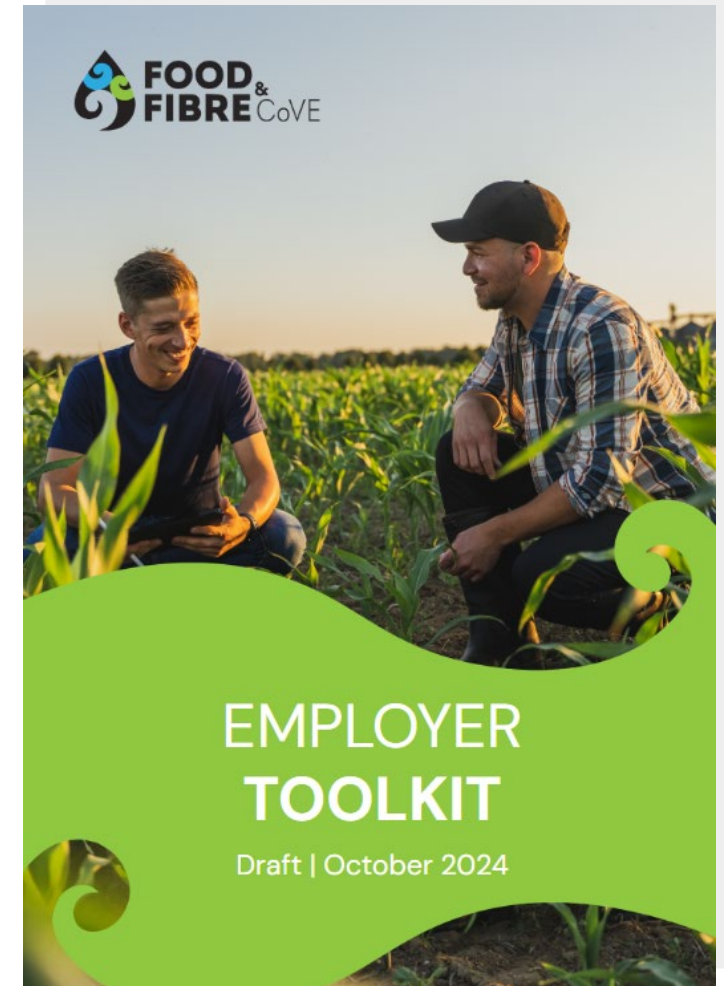
1. Will **food and fibre employers engage** in low involvement, accessible support to improve their retention rates?

2. How will elements of an **Employer Toolkit impact** the **perception and confidence** of employers to be able to retain their employees?

3. What elements are most **impactful**? (Toolkit sections as well as real examples of cohort applications - school leavers, career changers, and for Māori).

# We proposed a Toolkit for employers, managers & supervisors in the sector

We proposed to design, pilot, promote, evaluate, and publish an Employer Toolkit that provides a **free and simple resource to help address employee issues.**



**We split the Toolkit into sections. Each section aligns to an area that previous research showed could support retention outcomes.**

- 1 Attracting the right individuals
- 2 Māori Cultural Confidence
- 3 Workplace Wellbeing and Culture
- 4 Mentorship and Coaching
- 5 Training and Development
- 6 Employer Obligations

# Outputs → outcomes

## How the Toolkit aims to achieve improved retention outcomes



Outputs

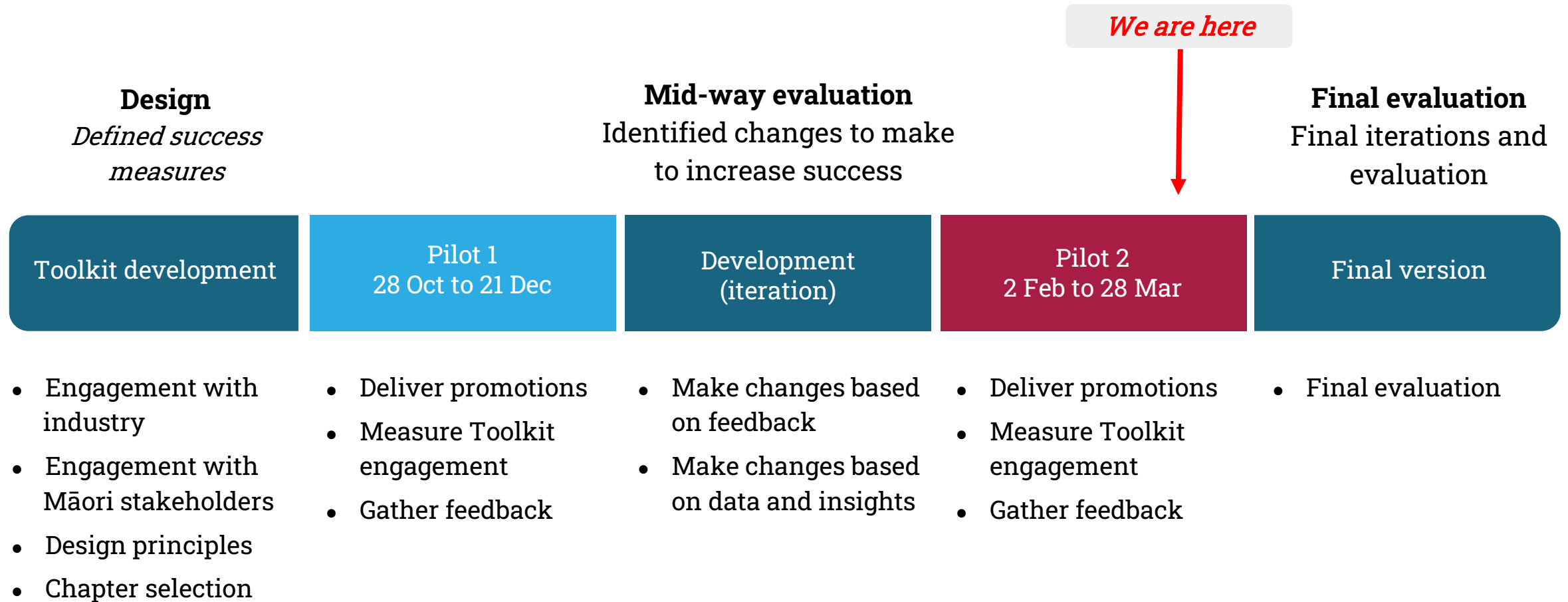
Outcomes



## 2. Designing the Toolkit



# We planned to deliver, monitor, and evaluate 2 pilot iterations



# We developed the toolkit alongside industry



Co-designing through  
workshops and interviews



Desktop research

Industry agreed retention is a big problem, and helped us hone in on specific pain points that employers are facing.  
Key pain points identified from industry engagement.

---

Pastoral care and  
communication

Mental health

Communication needs of  
younger generations

Induction processes

Learning & development

Needs of different  
generations

Training and development

Not equipped to support Māori in  
the workforce

## What did industry tell us about retention?

“

Retention  
comes up a lot  
more in social  
conversations,  
and at work.

“

On-farm  
retention is  
always in the  
conversation  
for leadership.

“

People are  
more willing to  
vote with their  
feet and leave  
when things  
aren't to their  
individual liking.

## What is causing pain points for employers?

“ Misconceptions around what working in the sector is actually like can mean people leave because they didn't realise the realities of the job.”

“ Younger generations expect more flexibility. Employers are more traditional and have different expectations.”

## What are some opportunities for employers?

“

**Career changers** –  
Good source of hires  
to attract as they  
have **better retention  
rates.**

“

**Culture and pastoral  
care** – for all ages – is  
becoming a **bigger  
role** for employers.



# We took a targeted approach to ensure outcomes for Māori

We talked to Māori employers and employees about their views on:

- Qualities and actions of an 'ideal' employer of Māori.
- What are the key challenges Māori face in the Food and Fibre workplace.
- Tangible solutions to support Māori in the Food and Fibre workplace.
- Design principles for the Toolkit to tautoko Māori and non-Māori looking to support Māori employees.
- Advice on Toolkit chapters.



Providing culturally relevant training and leadership opportunities can empower Māori employees and lead to better outcomes for both employers and employees.

# This all helped us form our Toolkit design principles

**1**

**Simple and easy to read**  
(plain english, no jargon).

**2**

**Uses visuals**  
(explaining things through pictures).

**3**

**Uses a 'grass roots' tone**  
(coming from a friend not a corporate).

**4**

**Relatable to majority**  
(examples across industries, big and small business).

**5**

**Short in length.**

**6**

**Easy to navigate**  
(short titles, different formats).

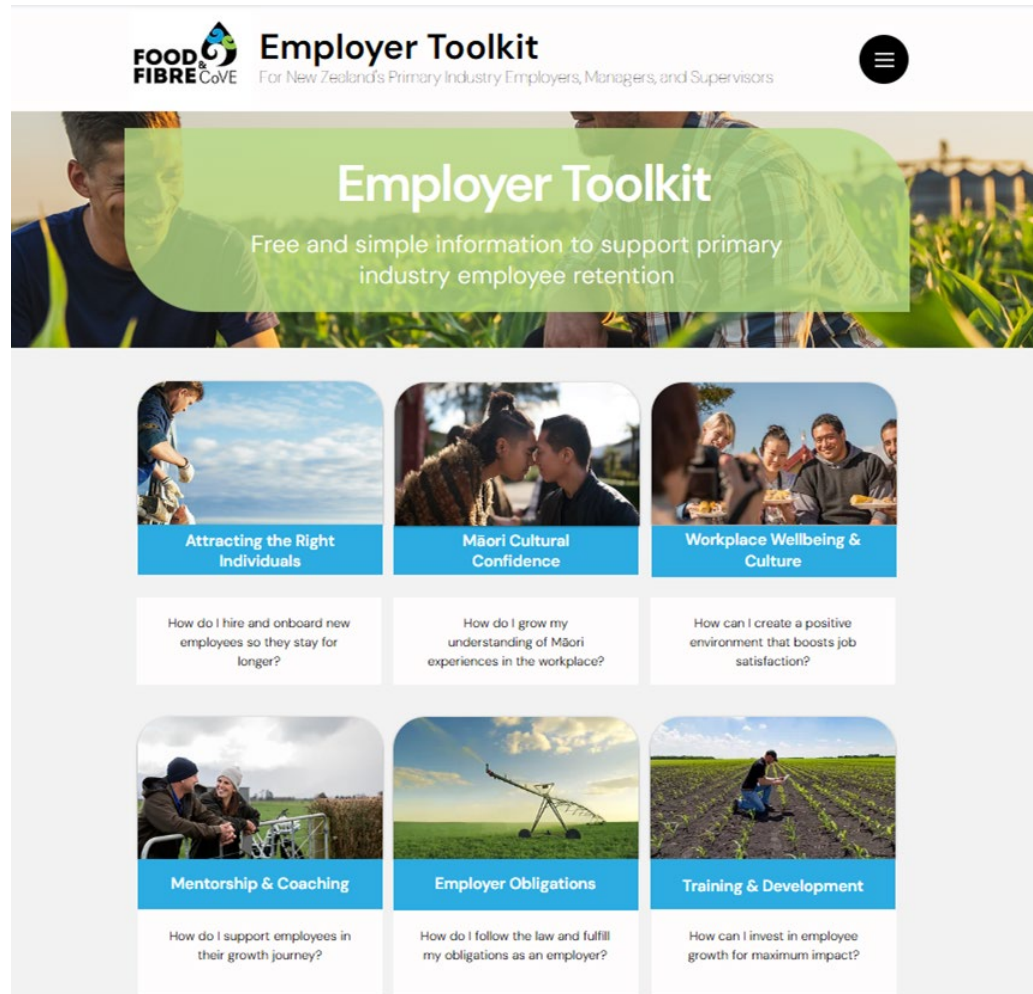


### 3. Pilot 1

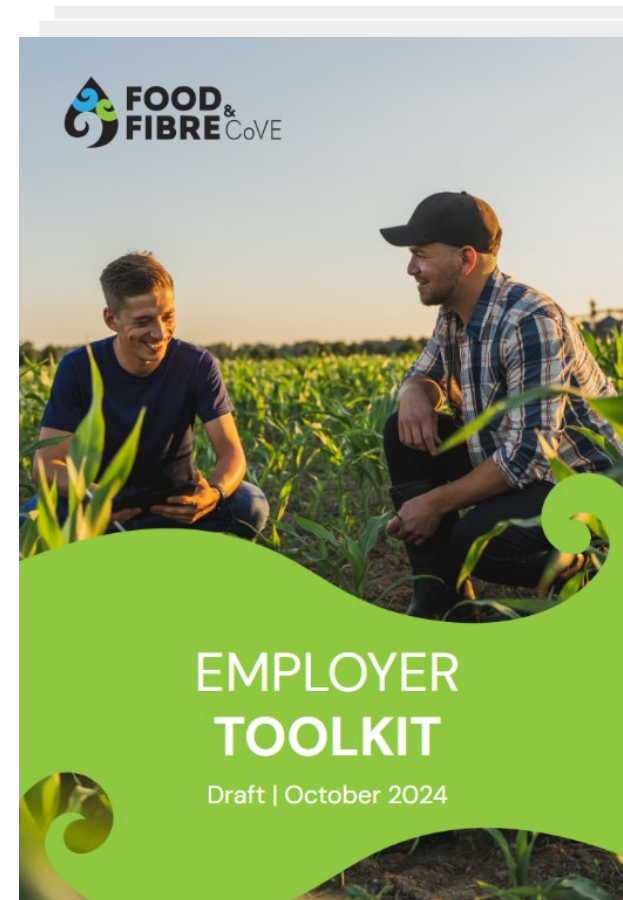




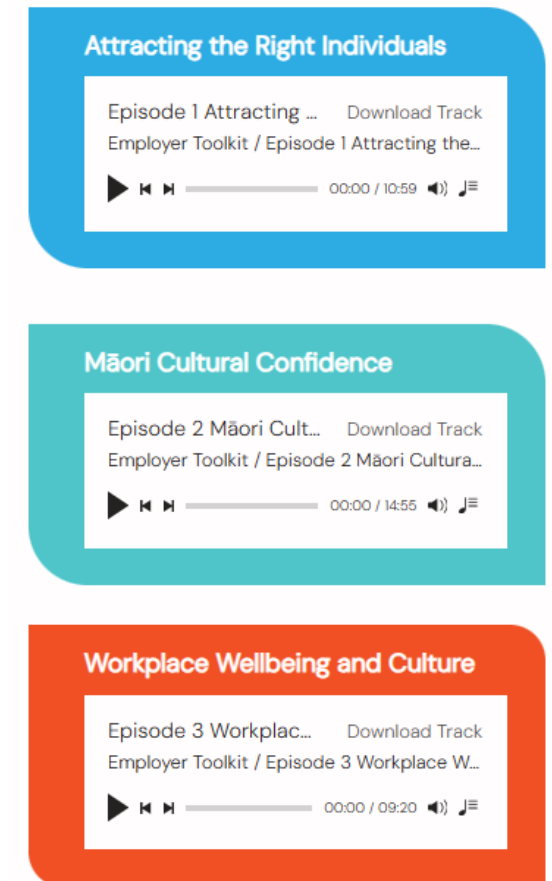
# The first pilot launched at the end of October 2024



Website

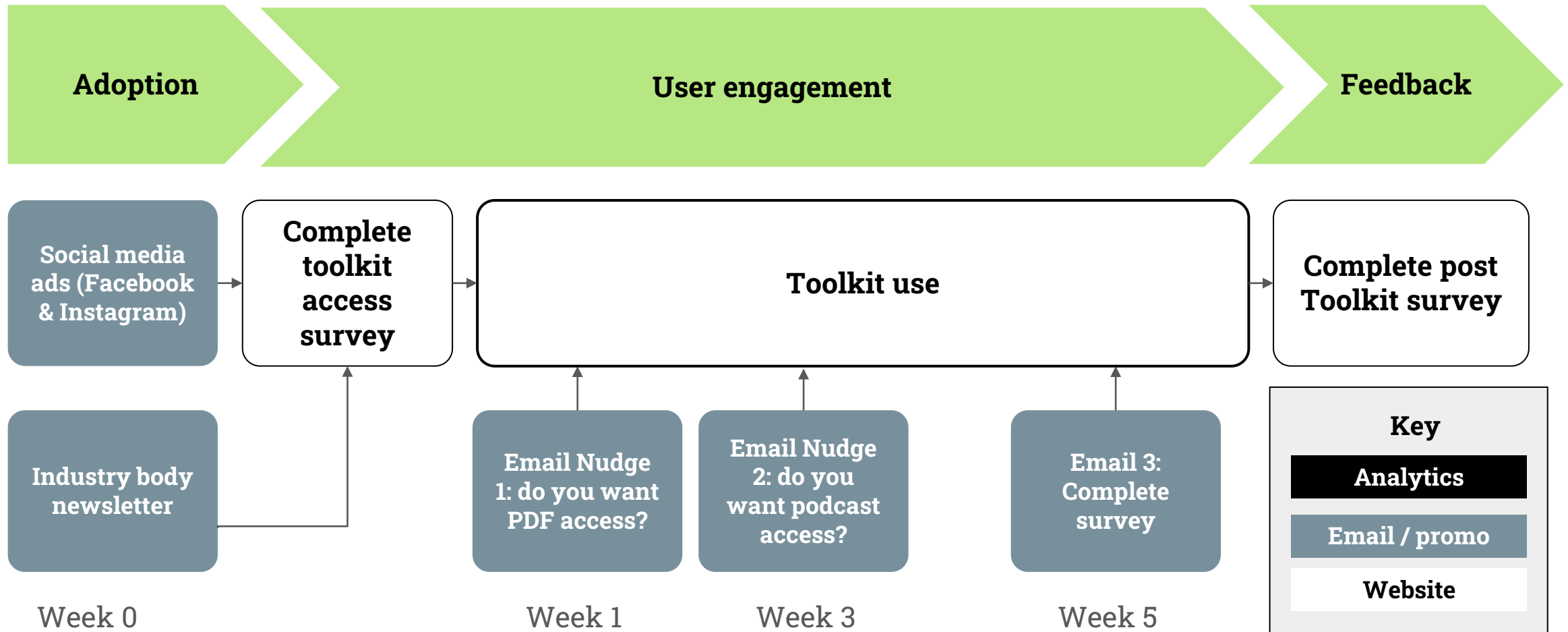


PDF



Audio podcast

# The user journey through the Toolkit has 3 phases





# Adoption: Pilot 1 promotions drove traffic from Meta

 **Food and Fibre toolkit**  
Sponsored 

Our free handbook provides tips for promoting health and wellness among your staff. Access your free guide now!

## Get access to easy steps to improve the wellbeing of your employees

Replacing an employee can be costly – around 30% to 200% of an employee's annual wage



**EMPLOYER TOOLKIT**  
First 1 October 2024

[www.employertoolkitnz.org](http://www.employertoolkitnz.org)  
**Get Access to Your Free Toolkit Here**  
Improve your staff retention

**LEARN MORE**



## Toolkit Access

This survey will take you less than 1 minute, and grants you access to the Toolkit which contains free and simple information to support primary industry employee retention.

By submitting I acknowledge that this is a pilot, which will anonymously track how I use this Toolkit for the sole purpose of improving it. My email address and first name is being collected only to send me different formats (printable and audio) version of the Toolkit, and a follow-up feedback survey. You can unsubscribe at any time. For more on our privacy policy please see [here](#).

First Name

Email \*

Which sector do you most closely belong to? \*

- ☐ Dairy
- ☐ Fruit / Vegetables / Arable / Plants
- ☐ Sheep and Beef / Livestock
- ☐ Forestry
- ☐ Viticulture / Winemaking
- ☐ Aquaculture / Seafood
- ☐ Apiculture / Beekeeping
- ☐ Poultry / Pork
- ☐ Supporting Industries / Advisory Services
- ☐ Other

Are you a manager, employer or supervisor in the Primary Industries? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Access the Toolkit**

We ran 7 different ad campaigns focusing on different potential employer pain points.

We used different Landing page to observe where users came from and ensure they were in our target audience.

# Engagement: We used web analytics and email analytics to observe interactions with the Toolkit

## Traffic Overview

Track your site's traffic trends and get to know your visitors. [Learn more](#)

Oct 28 - Nov 11, 2024 compared to previous period (Oct 13 - Oct 27, 2024)

Site sessions

794 ↑ 562%

Unique visitors

704 ↑ 738%

### Sessions over time



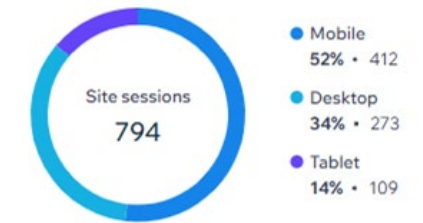
[View Report](#)

### New vs returning visitors



[View Report](#)

### Sessions by device



[View Report](#)

### Delivery statistics

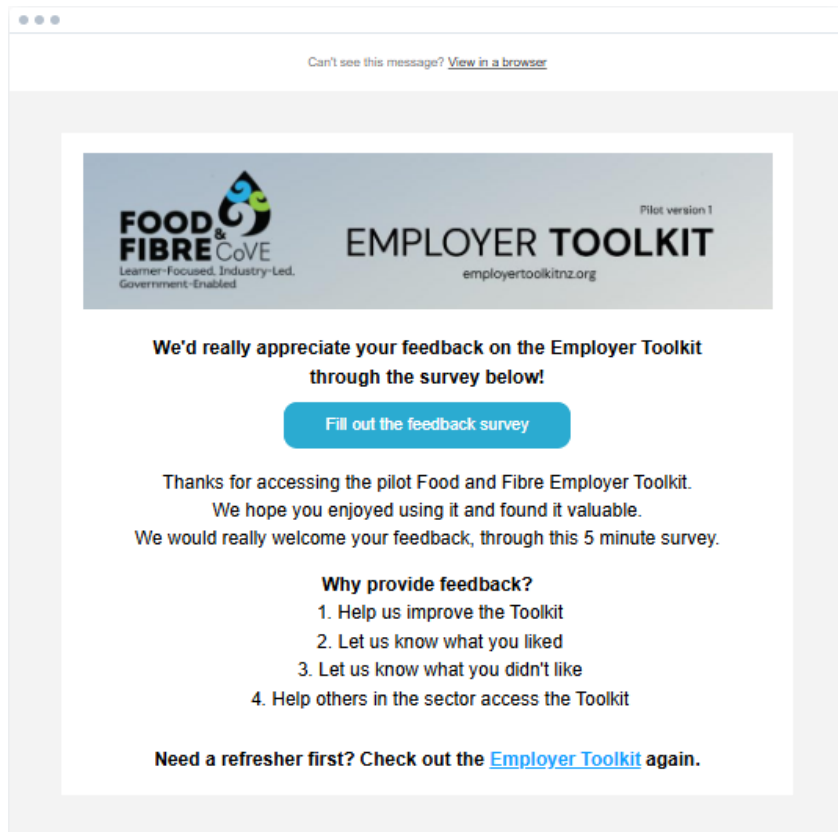
This email was sent to **158 contacts**. Check how they interact with these triggers. [How to read this data](#)

**151**  
Delivered  
Delivery rate: 96%

**83**  
Opened  
Open rate: 55%

**35**  
Clicked  
Click rate: 23%

# Feedback: We sent out an email inviting people to feedback via a 5 minute survey



### Employer Toolkit Feedback Survey

We'd love to hear about your experience using the Employer Toolkit in this quick survey. This will help us iterate the Toolkit for the next pilot release. It should take you no longer than 5 minutes.

What industry do you work most closely in? \*

- ☐ Dairy
- ☐ Fruit / Vegetable
- ☐ Sheep and Beef
- ☐ Forestry
- ☐ Viticulture / Winery
- ☐ Aquaculture
- ☐ Apiculture / Beekeeping
- ☐ Poultry / Poultry Processing
- ☐ Other

Which version(s) of the Toolkit did you use?

- ☐ Website (employer toolkitnz.org)

**Prior to using the Employer Toolkit, how did you feel about the following statements:**

I think my workplace has a challenge with employee turnover / retention... \*

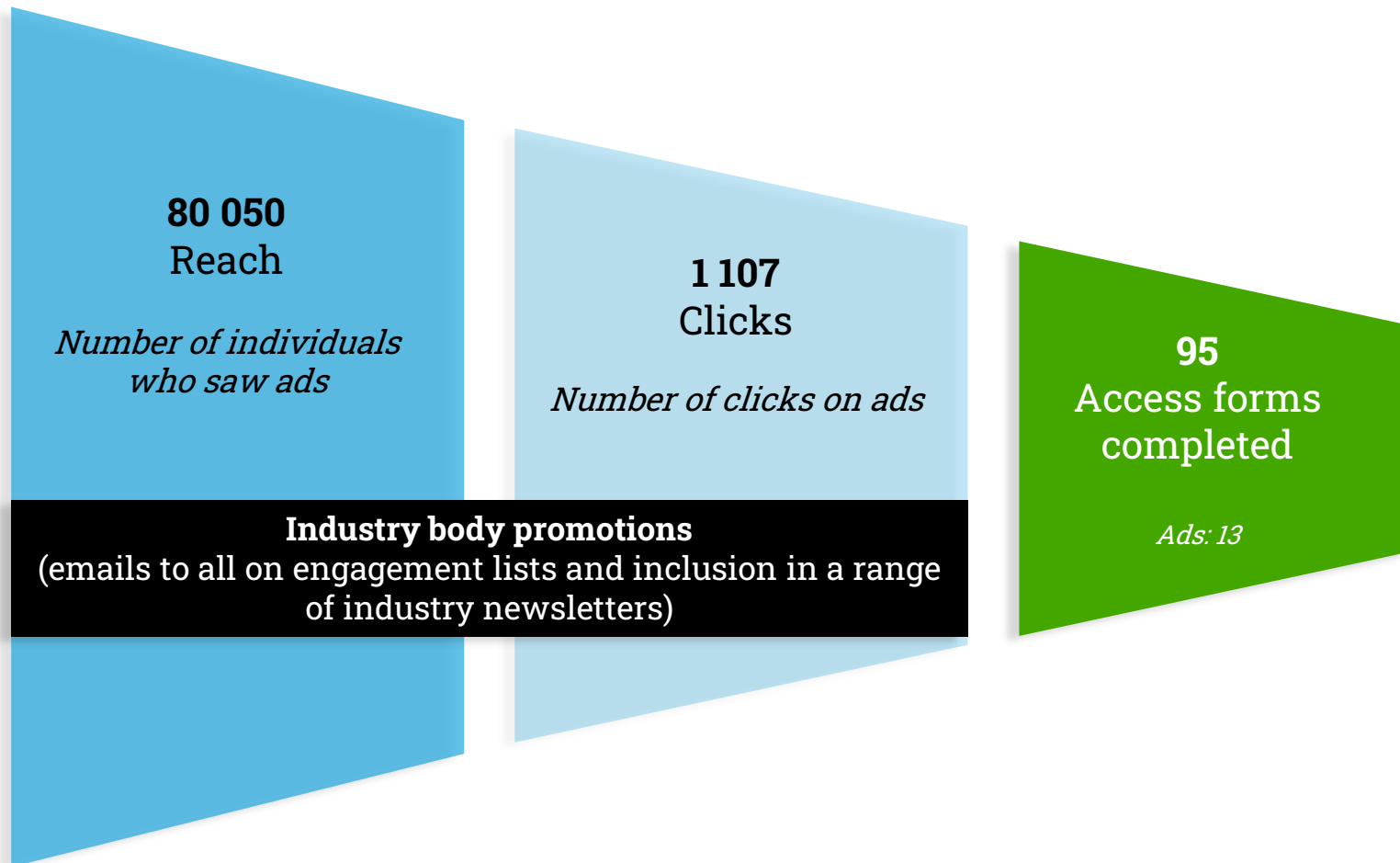
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ N/A





## 4. Mid-way evaluation

# Adoption: How do people engage with Meta Ad promotions?



**95 access forms completed** in Pilot 1.

Target Audience

**77% Target Audience**  
**23% Other.**

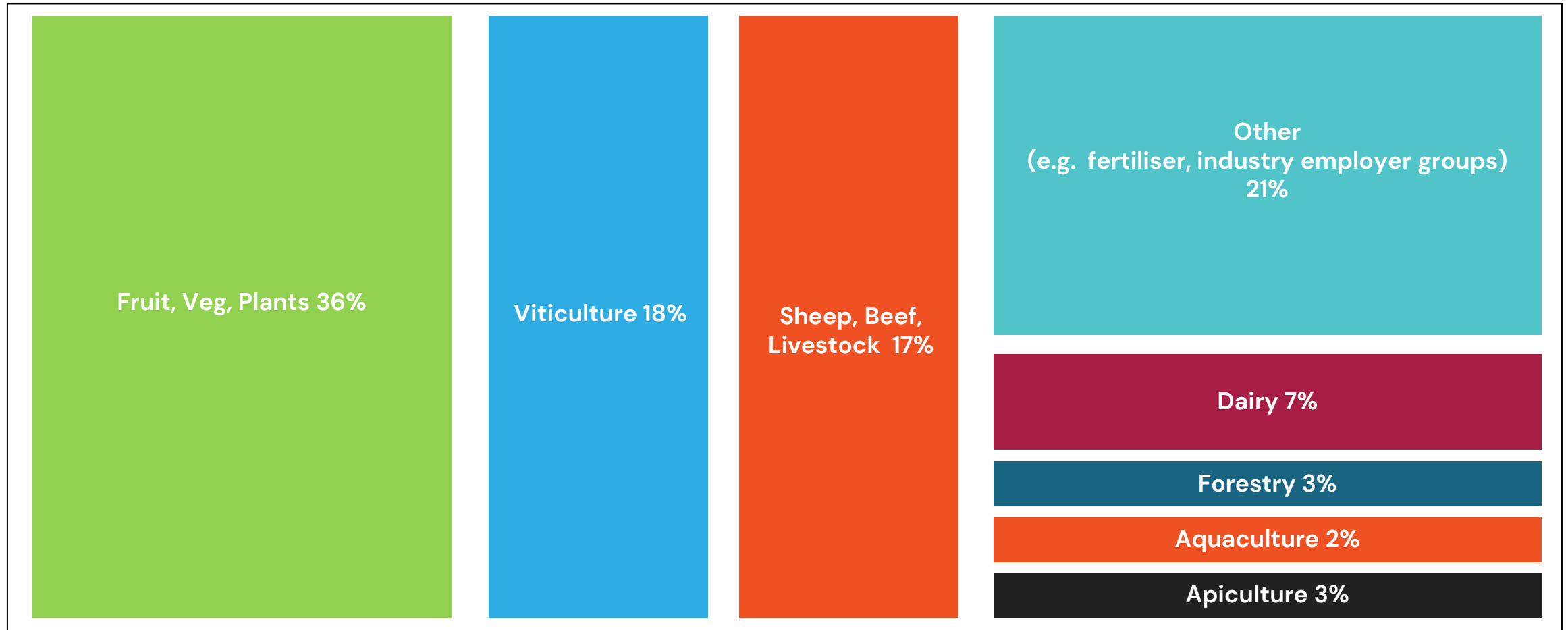
Traffic source

**14% Meta ads**  
**86% Industry body communications.**



# The Toolkit is being adopted across the sector

Access form by industry demographics.



Not to scale,

# Attracting the right individuals and Māori cultural confidence were the two best performing sections

Top 6 content pages (page views).*	Hits
Attracting the right individuals	101
Māori cultural confidence	98
Training and development	50
Workplace wellbeing + culture	49
Elements of te ao Māori	38
Mentorship + coaching	38

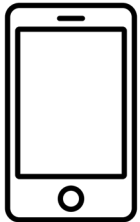
\*For the period between 28 October and 21 December - Not to scale.

# People are accessing the Toolkit in different ways

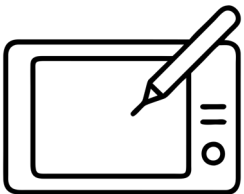
## Users by devices



**51%** desktop



**39%** mobile



**10%** tablet

The average session duration is **6m 0s**.

Users visited an average of **1.6** pages per session.

## Content Formats

**319 website homepage site sessions**

**25 PDF downloads**

**31 Audio podcast site sessions**

# Industry feedback

While we did not receive much feedback from surveys, the Toolkit has received good feedback so far from industry via email and calls.

## Feedback theme:

The Toolkit is useful for employers.

“ I think this looks fantastic. It's very easy to navigate and very easy to follow the pathways, each section has a clean and clear look, I think employers are going to find this very useful.

**(Industry body)**

The Toolkit both collates existing resources and includes new information in a helpful way.

“ Might it be possible to have the Toolkit in sections? Our sector is very well resourced, but you have included some things we don't currently include and I think would be valuable additions.

**(Industry body)**

# Māori cultural confidence

The Māori cultural confidence section performed exceptionally well across our measures and in feedback from Industry and Management group.

2nd highest section page views on website

Highest click through on email campaigns (excl. homepage)

However we got some negative engagement from members of the public commenting on ads highlighting the free resource to develop Māori cultural confidence.

Comments were racially charged and not constructive, and ranged from dismissive comments to paragraph rants.

“

There are some things I really like. Especially the Maori experiences section and the buddy section. The other thing I quite enjoyed was the use of the case studies. It is quite an interesting way of getting people to reflect on how they might be going.  
**(Industry body)**



# Feedback and analytics helped us identify problem areas

## Adoption

- Promotions on Meta were not as effective as we planned.
- The access form was preventing user engagement.

## User engagement

- Home page needs to be easier to navigate through.
- Users wanted to be able to search the site to find specific topics.
- Users wanted to download individual sections as PDFs.
- Formatting on some pages needed improvement for mobile.

## Feedback

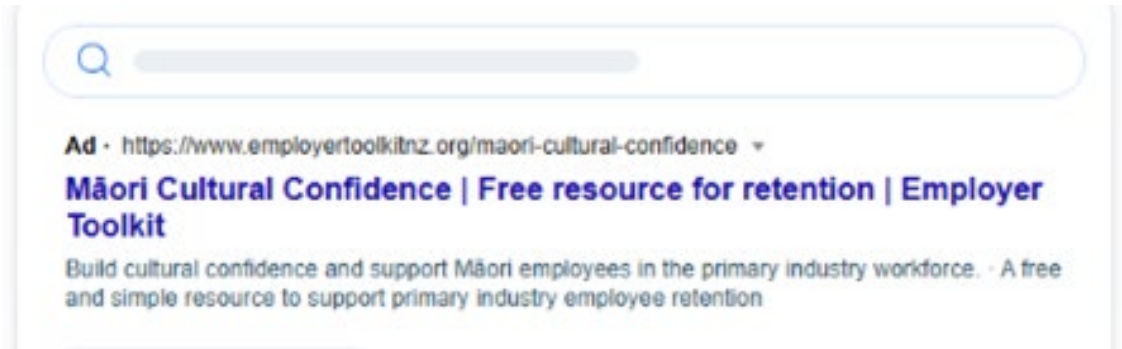
- Feedback survey responses were extremely low.

## 5. Pilot 2





# Adoption: Pilot 2 promotions drive traffic from Google



We ran 7 different Google ad campaigns each highlighting a separate section of the Toolkit.

Access form pages are being used to capture traffic from industry body communications only (same as in Pilot 1).

Pop up forms are being used to capture traffic from Google and other sources.

A screenshot of a pop-up form titled "Get Access to a Printable Version of the Food and Fibre Employer Toolkit + Give Your Feedback". The form includes a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains the following fields and options:

- "First name \*" with a light green input field.
- "Email \*" with a light green input field.
- "Are you a manager, employer or supervisor in the Primary Industries? \*"
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No / Not Primary Industries
- "What sector do you most closely belong to? \*"
  - ☐ Dairy
  - ☐ Fruit / Vegetables / Arables / Plants
  - ☐ Sheep and Beef / Livestock
  - ☐ Forestry
  - ☐ Viticulture / Winemaking
  - ☐ Aquaculture / Seafood
  - ☐ Apiculture / Beekeeping
  - ☐ Poultry / Pork
  - ☐ Supporting Industries / Advisory Services
  - ☐ Other

At the bottom, there is a small disclaimer: "By submitting I acknowledge that this is a pilot, which will anonymously track how I use this Toolkit for the sole purpose of improving it. My email address and first name is being collected only to send me different formats (printable and audio) of the Toolkit, and a follow-up feedback survey. You can unsubscribe at any time. For more on our privacy policy please see [here](#)." Below the disclaimer is a green button labeled "Access Printable Version Now".



# Employer Toolkit

For New Zealand's Primary Industry Employers, Managers, and Supervisors



Check out the following six sections to increase your people's job satisfaction, boost productivity and keep your team motivated and committed. Click the section in the employee lifecycle that interests you the most!



**Employee lifecycle**

**Attract**

**Retain**





# Employer Toolkit

For New Zealand's Primary Industry Employers, Managers, and Supervisors



## Search the Toolkit

Q mentoring

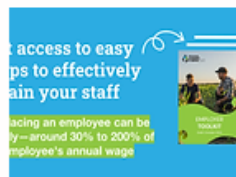


16 items found for "mentoring"



### Understanding **Mentoring** & Coaching | Food and Fibre Employer Toolkit

Understanding the roles of **mentors**, coaches, and buddies in the food and fibre industry can significantly...  
Understanding **Mentoring** and Coaching What is the difference between a **mentor**, a coach and a buddy? See...  
Below for Information On: **Mentor** Coach Buddy What is a **mentor**? Key activities **Mentors** listen, share their...



### Mentorship & Coaching | Food and Fibre Employer Toolkit

**Mentoring** and coaching are vital tools in the employment relationship, particularly in the food and fibre...  
**Mentoring** and coaching is a relationship is between a more experienced person and a less experienced...  
**Mentoring** and coaching are vital tools in the employment relationship, particularly in the food and fibre...



### Actions to Take | Food and Fibre Employer Toolkit

Actions to Take How can I implement **mentoring** and coaching? What support do they need to be a good...  
**mentor** / coach? Do they have the capacity to **mentor** and/or coach? Coaching and **mentoring** can both...  
follow a simple process, by the **mentor**.



### What Good **Mentoring** and Coaching Looks Like | Food and Fibre Emplo...

, which emphasises the relationship between an experienced **mentor** and a less experienced mentee...  
elements that contribute to effective **mentoring** and coaching practices. What Good Looks Like What does a...  
good **mentoring** and coaching system look like? **Mentoring** and coaching is important for the following...

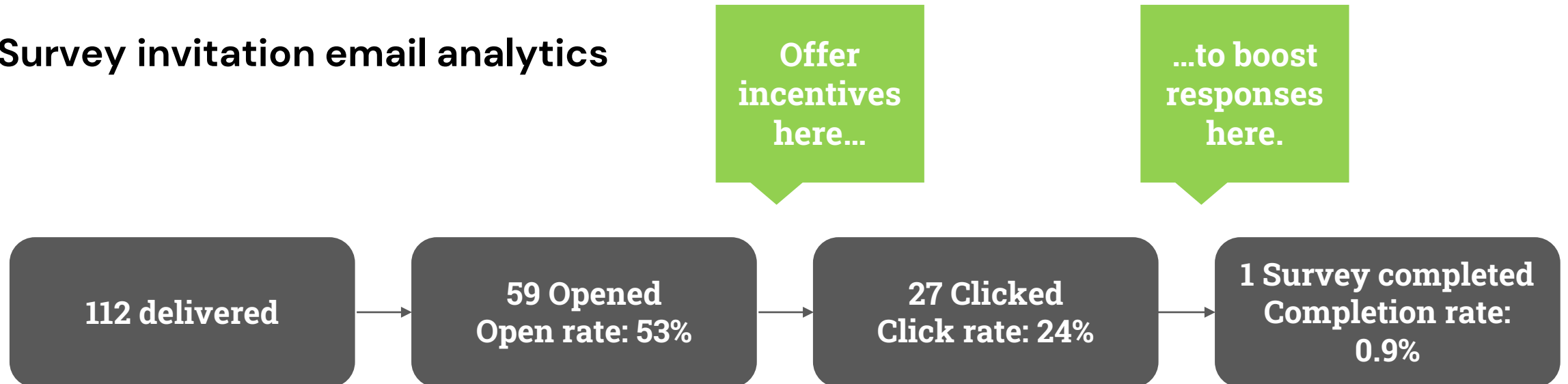


# Incentives will be used to increase survey feedback

We plan to make the most of the qualitative feedback we have received from Industry stakeholders and the Management Group. However, we still would like to increase the rate of completion of our Feedback surveys.

To do this, we plan to send out more 'nudge' emails to remind contacts to complete the survey, and offer monetary incentives for completion.

## Survey invitation email analytics



## Pilot 2 results so far (*Mid Feb*)

### Adoption

There have been 70 new signups to as part of Pilot 2.

Google ads are performing well - far surpassing Meta ads:

- 53 793 Impressions
- 935 Clicks
- 1.7% Click-through rate
- **27 pop up form signups from Google ads**
- 43 from industry communications

(as of 19/02)

### User engagement

Average pages per session **1.4**.

Average session duration **1m 23s**.

Top content pages (site sessions):

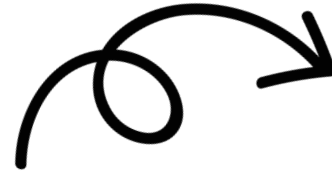
- Attracting the right individuals (40)
- Your obligations as an employer (23)
- Mentorship and coaching (18)
- Workplace wellbeing and culture (14)
- Training and development (14)

### Feedback

Not yet applicable as Feedback surveys have not been sent out yet.

A person wearing a cap and boots is walking away from the camera down a long, brightly lit corridor in a dairy milking parlor. To the left, several cows are in metal milking stalls. The floor is wet and reflective. A large window at the end of the corridor lets in bright sunlight, creating a strong lens flare. A green text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

6. What's next?



Scan me for access to Pilot 2

Visit the Toolkit at:  
[www.employertoolkitnz.org](http://www.employertoolkitnz.org)

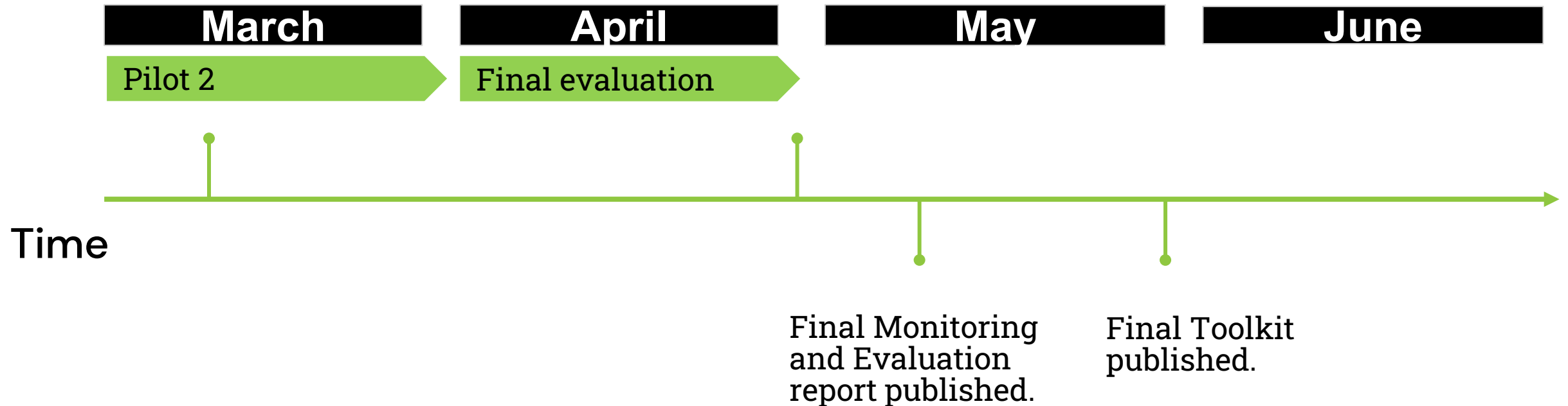
A free, accessible, and user-friendly Toolkit  
to support all employers, managers, and  
supervisors in the industry.



# What's next for the Toolkit? How will it live on?

The final report for this project will be completed in May.

The final version of the Toolkit will be updated in May. We are keen to hear from industry how they may want to use it going forward.





A person wearing a cap and boots is walking away from the camera down a long, brightly lit corridor in a dairy milking parlor. To the left, several cows are in metal milking stalls. The floor is wet and reflective. A large window at the end of the corridor lets in bright sunlight, creating a strong lens flare. A green text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

4. Questions / Pātai?



Ngā mihi

