

Snapshot of the teaching profession in Aotearoa New Zealand 2023



**Teaching
Council of
Aotearoa
New Zealand**

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Stand tall. Shape the future.

Introduction

In early 2023 we undertook research with teachers to better understand how they currently feel about teaching and the teaching profession.

The research consisted of five separate focus groups which were held with primary teachers, secondary teachers, ECE teachers, Kaiako Māori teaching in full immersion settings, and pacific teachers.

Each focus group held was 1.5 hours long to allow deep discussion and occurred via zoom to ensure there were no barriers to participation. Within the groups we sought to ensure we captured the views of a diverse range of teachers including urban, regional, and rurally based, gender, age, level of teaching experience, and a representative sample of ethnicities including Pasifika.

In addition to the focus groups, we also invited 20,000 teachers to participate in a survey to share their thoughts on the state of the teaching profession and received 1,591 responses.

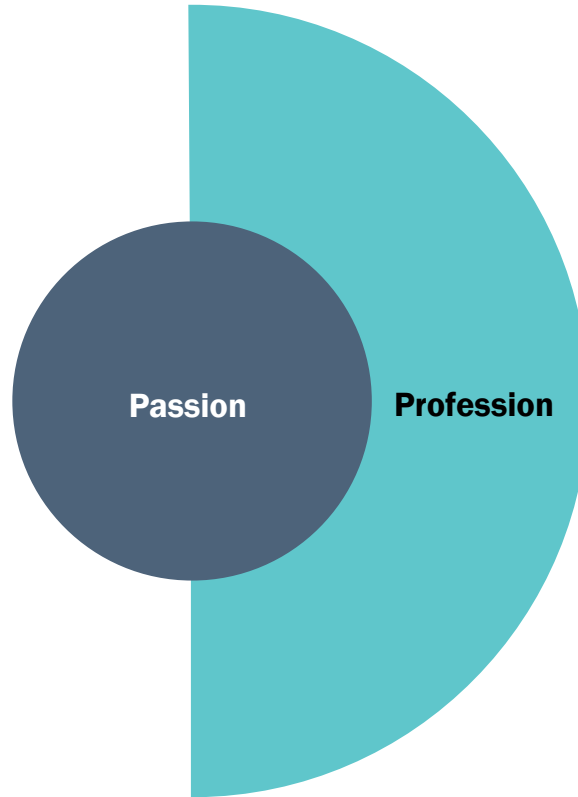
The research was undertaken on our behalf by an independent research organisation to ensure confidentiality and privacy.



At its core, teaching requires purpose

You must have a sense of purpose to be a teacher – because it's hard work and is not seen to pay well.

It is about being part of something bigger than themselves and making a positive and important contribution to society – this is what keeps teachers going when it's hard.



But teachers want to be seen as professionals

Perhaps it can be described as a calling or a vocation, because none of us are in it for the money... there's something inherently in teachers thinking that makes them want to teach.

However, I would say that does sometimes have an adverse effect for teachers... we do need to earn a living. We do need to be well paid, and we are professional.

- Secondary

Teachers feel they play a critical role in society and work hard to deliver to this

- It's busy and complex. Teachers feel required to 'wear many hats' and often go well beyond what is in their job description.
- There is honour and respect in the role – but also discussion of fatigue and burnout.

You want to make a difference. You want to help. I think it's a very influential role that we have. It's an honorable role.

- Kaiako Māori



And their role is rapidly becoming more complex – which creates stress and overwhelms

Impacts of Covid-19 and cost of living crisis

- Heightened pressure for teachers to flex to meet changing contexts, deliver lessons digitally
- Worsening attendance rates and challenges with students due to lack of resources or home issues

Need to keep up with technology

- ChatGPT and other AI creating questions about the future of education and curricula

Positive changes impacting workload and skills needs

- With understanding of neurodiversity increasing, there is greater pressure to better meet these diverse learning needs
- The need to have skills to better deliver better to Te Tiriti and include mātauranga Māori in the classroom



Teachers fear an increasing number of students will turn up without the necessities to learn as families struggle to afford food, uniforms and stationery.

**Teachers do not feel
that society always
recognises the
contribution of the
teaching profession**

*It's following the sort of
'un' words really:
underpaid, undervalued,
undermined.
- Primary*

Underpaid, undervalued, undermined – what’s behind this?

<p>Underpaid teachers should be paid what they are worth. This is led by unions and the Ministry of Education.</p>	<p>One year after graduation, the median annual earnings of a teacher are \$43,524, rising to just \$51,833 five years after graduation.</p> <p>Nursing and accounting graduates have similar salaries one year after graduation, but their median annual earnings rise to \$62,692 and \$63,996 respectively five years after graduation. (source Education Counts: Tertiary graduate earnings statistics).</p>
<p>Undervalued: teachers are experts who meet high standards to become and remain a teacher. Led by Teaching Council and the profession.</p>	<p>‘Can you imagine a member of the public walking into an operating theatre and trying to tell a surgeon how to do surgery? That’s what teachers experience on a daily basis’.</p> <p>‘There’s an appreciation from people who’ve had a good teacher, but a lack of understanding of the technical complexity and demanding nature of the job.’</p>
<p>Undermined: A lack of autonomy, and freedom to teach. Led by MoE, the profession and all parts of the education system.</p>	<p>Teaching was seen as an environment that offers little freedom to make expert decisions within the classroom because teachers are held accountable by external policies forced upon them. Teachers feel unable to teach the best way they know how because of the system.</p>

ECE teachers feel particularly undervalued

Inconsistency in qualification impacts perceptions

- People within the sector who are unregistered mean there are perceptions that ECE is unskilled work
- Inconsistency in quality across centres impacts total perceptions

Language is powerful

- ECE is referred to in ways that minimise the role – e.g., ‘childcare centre’ rather than education

Perceived to be ‘softer’ and less technical

- Despite being critical stage in child development, the science and training is not often recognised
- Workforce weighted more towards women – wrongly reinforcing perceptions of ‘soft’ skills. Men may not view ECE as a space for them.

I see myself as part of it [the teaching profession], but I think that society is the one that needs to see us as part of that too... We are fighting every day to claim that we are professionals... You get a bit undervalued.

- ECE

They don't mean to, but I don't think my friends and family think I have a real job.

- ECE

And kaiako Māori feel under pressure to uphold the taonga of their culture

They come into teaching with a different cultural lens

- Education is seen as taonga. Kaiako play an important role in preserving and delivering this.
- Kaiako Māori feel the responsibility of needing to 'fix' the system that is not serving their people, and to uphold, preserve and revitalise mātauranga Māori for future generations.
- In a more community-centric lens, teaching is one way of giving back

I went to one of my mentors and said 'what am I going to do?'. I went to a Māori boarding school, and he said, 'well that kura gave you five years, you go back and give that kura five years'. So I went back.

- Kaiako Māori

I'm not just a kaiako. I'm the 'auntie', a nutritionist, a councillor.

- Kaiako Māori

Teachers want and need teaching to be recognised as a critical contribution to society

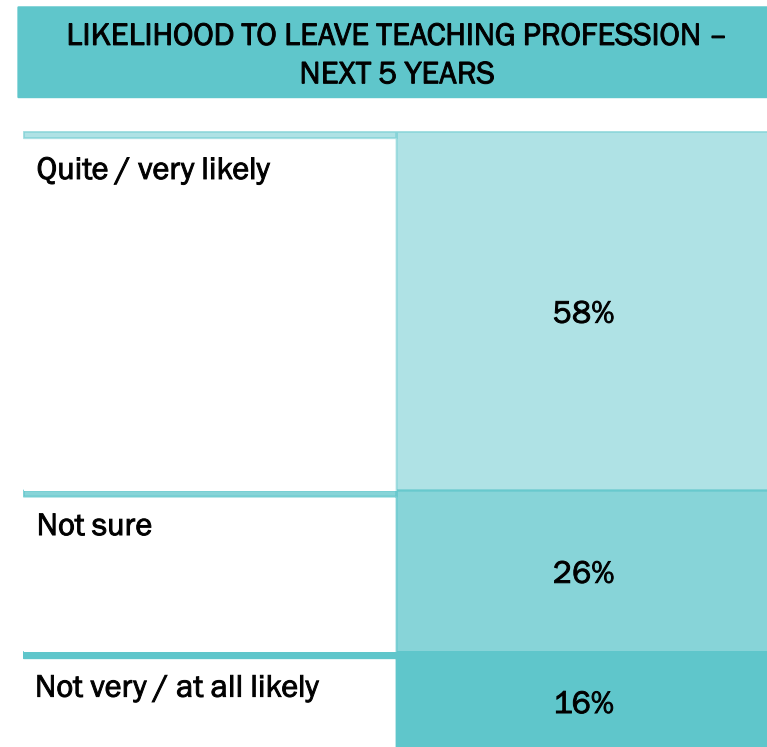
Teachers want tangible change, not just in salary and working conditions, but also in greater support and leadership for the future of the profession in a changing world.

Emotionally, teachers have a need to feel validated, recognised, valued, and appreciated for the work they are doing.

ECE and Kaiako Māori feel particularly under pressure, in need of strong advocacy.

Teachers are unhappy – we’re seeing 58% of teachers saying they are likely to leave the teaching profession in the next five years

Source: Teaching Council survey - Teachers
LEAVE_TEACHING: How likely would you be to leave the teaching profession in the next 5 years?
Base: Total n=1591



The top three concerns of teachers are well known

TOP 3 CONCERNS AMONG TEACHERS

1

STRESS/WORKLOAD – 60%

“The government does not respect or understand teachers and the extra hours, demands and multi-stresses they experience consistently.”

“Workload and unreasonable hours spent on planning hence very little time spent with family and own children.”

“Losing good teachers due to increased workload...expected to be social workers without the training...no longer work life balance.”

“Teacher burnout, young people enter the profession and leave within the first 5 years.”

2

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION – 44%

“Most teachers change their pathway because of low salary.”

“Salary too low, not financially viable.”

“The pay does not meet the actual job we do.”

“Being able to pay my registration fees next year.”

“The decline in pay and conditions for teachers that are causing a lack of supply in the teaching profession.”

“Lack of financial reward for the demands of the job in an increasingly demanding profession.”

3

RESOURCES/SUPPORT – 36%

“Lack of classroom support for teachers with special needs students.”

“Ratios! Ratios! Ratios! Too many children in one room/space.”

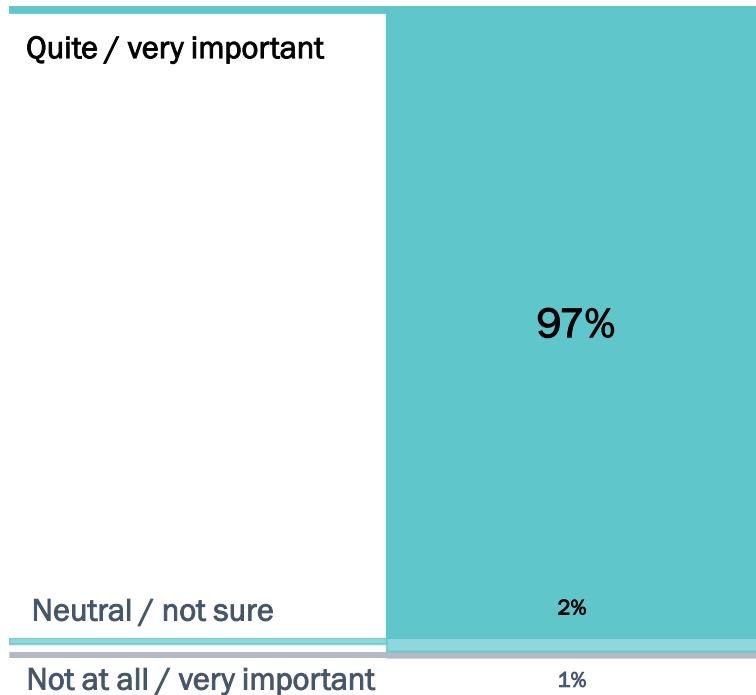
“Expectations of teachers to continue learning but lack of resource to support this.”

“Lack of support from the government which sets the views the community and parents have of teachers.”

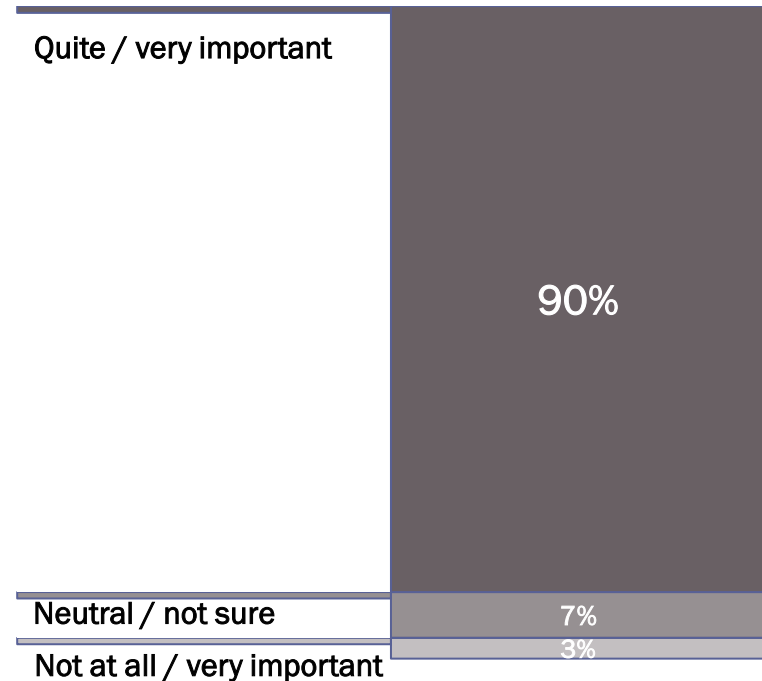
“Too many expectations with large class numbers and limited resources.”

There's no doubt that the teaching profession is considered important by teachers, as well as the general public

IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING PROFESSION: WHAT TEACHERS THINK



IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING PROFESSION: WHAT THE PUBLIC THINKS



The teaching profession is ranked highly by the public, but teachers do not see this view

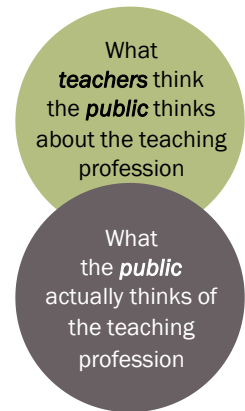
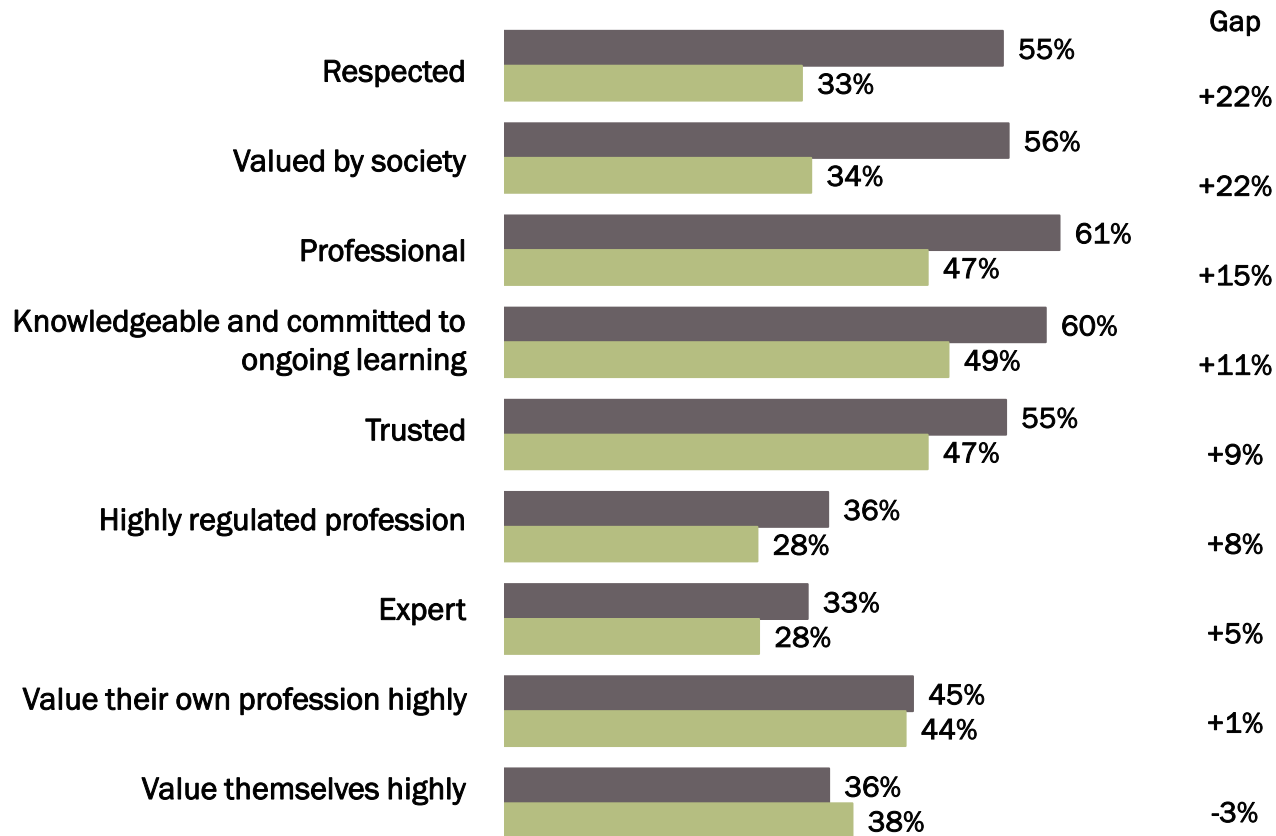
RANKING BASED ON NUMBER OF PROFESSION-RELATED DESCRIPTIONS

PROFESSION	WHAT THE PUBLIC THINKS	WHAT TEACHERS THINK	WHAT TEACHERS <i>THINK</i> THE PUBLIC THINKS
Nurses	1	1	1
Teachers	2	3	5
Police	3	4	4
Physiotherapists	4	2	2
Accountants	5	5	3
Social workers	6	6	6

Source: Teaching Council survey – Teachers & TRA Omnibus
 VALUE_OWN. Which of the following would you use to describe...; VALUE_SOCIAL. Which of the following do you think New Zealanders would use to describe...
 Teacher survey base: Total n=1591. TRA Omnibus base: Total n=505.

There is definitely an issue with self-worth within the profession – teachers do not believe society values them, and the public senses this

TEACHING PROFESSION-RELATED DESCRIPTIONS

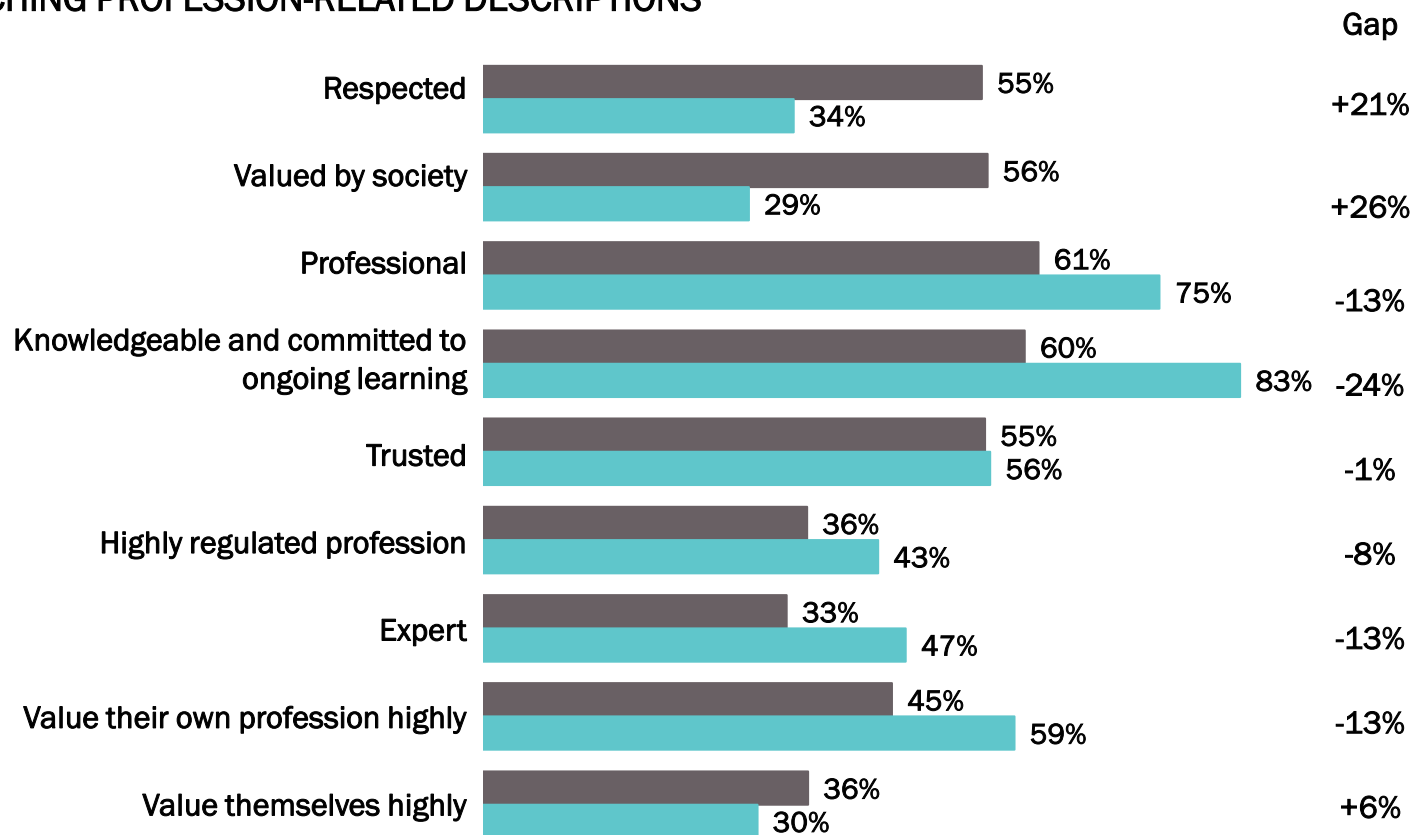


Note: 1% difference in gap versus bar chart due to rounding.

Source: Teaching Council survey – Teachers & TRA Omnibus
 VALUE_OWN. Which of the following would you use to describe...; VALUE_SOCIAL. Which of the following do you think New Zealanders would use to describe...
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Teachers believe that they are professionals – but they are held back by how they view their place in society

TEACHING PROFESSION-RELATED DESCRIPTIONS



What **teachers** think about the teaching profession

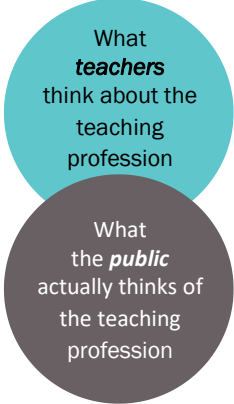
What the **public** actually thinks of the teaching profession

Note: 1% difference in gap versus bar chart due to rounding.

Source: Teaching Council survey – Teachers & TRA Omnibus
 VALUE_OWN. Which of the following would you use to describe...; VALUE_SOCIAL. Which of the following do you think New Zealanders would use to describe...
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Part of this disconnect is lack of knowledge among the public of what skills are required in the teaching profession

TEACHING ASSOCIATIONS



Source: Teaching Council survey – Teachers & TRA Omnibus ASSOCIATION. Here is a list of statements that people may associate with teaching. Which of the following do you associate with teaching? ASSOCIATION_TEACHING. Here is a list of statements that people may associate with teaching. Which of the following do you associate with teaching? Teacher survey base: Total n=1591. TRA Omnibus base: Total n=505.

Note: 1% difference in gap versus bar chart due to rounding.

IMPLICATION

There is a need to build to greater understanding of what makes up expertise in the teaching profession

The public do value the teaching profession – but where they see value does not align with where teachers see value.

This disconnect will stand in the way of building a highly valued teaching profession.

The future has new challenges ahead for the teaching profession

Changing Communities



Changing Climate



Changing Values





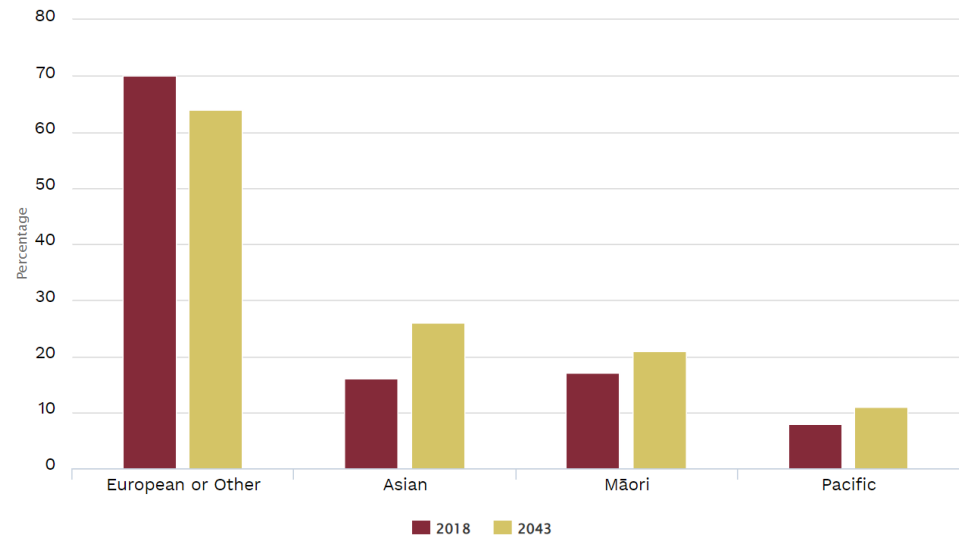
Changing communities -Aotearoa towns and cities are rapidly becoming 'hyper-aged'

- By 2034, 21% of our population will be aged 65+ (compared to 15.6% in 2022)
- By 2048, all regions will have more elderly people (65+) than children aged 0-14
- The percentage of our population aged 0-14 peaked at 32.9% in 1963 – by 2024 it will be less than half of that (16.3%)
- By 2032, there will be around 30,000 fewer primary- and secondary-aged students in our schools and kura - a drop of around 4%

By 2043 the ethnic make-up of our population will be very different from what it is now

- By 2043, New Zealand is projected to be home to just over six million people, with just over a quarter of our population being Asian, 21% Māori, and 11% Pacific
- The Asian population will be the fastest growing ethnic group in New Zealand
- All regions will experience increases in their Māori population
- And Pacific people's share of the population will also grow

New Zealand population by ethnic group



Changing Climate

- Latest evidence suggests the world will exceed 1.5°C warming by 2040
- Climate change impacts from 1.5°C warming include inundated coastlines, intensifying droughts and poverty with global damage estimated to cost \$54 trillion
- The United States along with Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines and Vietnam are home to 50 million people who will be exposed to the effects of increased coastal flooding by 2040, if 1.5°C degrees of warming occur
- At 2°C degrees of warming, the report predicts a “disproportionately rapid evacuation” of people from the tropics. “In some parts of the world, national borders will become irrelevant”



A new pattern of more extreme weather across the globe

Increases in extreme heat and intense precipitation



Hurricanes and other storms are likely to become stronger

Floods and droughts will become more common

In New Zealand:



~5% increase in extreme rainfall
10%+ for intense thunderstorms



0.7-1.0°C
increase
by 2040



\$800M
storm costs
in past 5 years

Sources: IPCC climate projections, NIWA



Changing Values

- As Generation Z enters the workforce, their career aspirations are shaped by their deep connection to technology and social media, the globalisation of the world economy, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Generation Z's career goals include:
 1. **Amenities, Benefits & Salary:** Gen Z is motivated by more than just money. While salary remains important, they value it less than other generations. They also prioritise benefits such as paid time off, mental health days, and activities that create a sense of community.
 2. **Personal & Professional Values:** For Gen Z, personal and professional values are intertwined. They seek work that aligns with their values and allows them to make a positive impact.
 3. **Virtual, In-Person & Hybrid Work:** Gen Z values work-life balance and prefers a mix of virtual, in-person, and hybrid work arrangements.
 4. **Technology & Flexibility:** Gen Z appreciates technology and flexibility in the workplace. They value organisations that provide training on new technologies and offer flexible work options.
 5. **Training & Development:** Gen Z believes that one size does not fit all when it comes to training and development. They prefer personalised learning experiences tailored to their individual needs.
- These aspirations reflect Gen Z's desire for meaningful work, fair pay, work-life balance, and opportunities for growth and development.

School leavers' 'dream career' aspirations don't include teacher

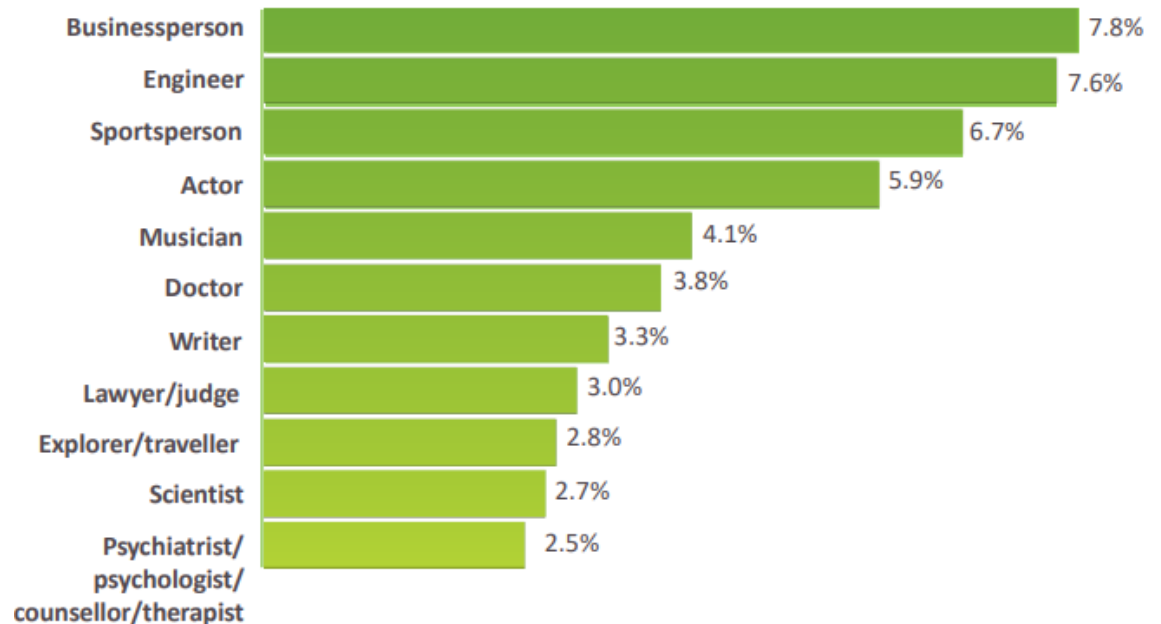
Primary students see teacher as a prestigious professional occupation up there with doctor and police officer.

But 50.3% of school leavers aspire to one of just 11 dream careers.

For school leavers, teacher ranks as their #13 dream career, just behind mechanic at #12 and just ahead of vet at #14.

Current teachers have a critical role to play in helping the next generation see teaching as honourable, challenging, and rewarding

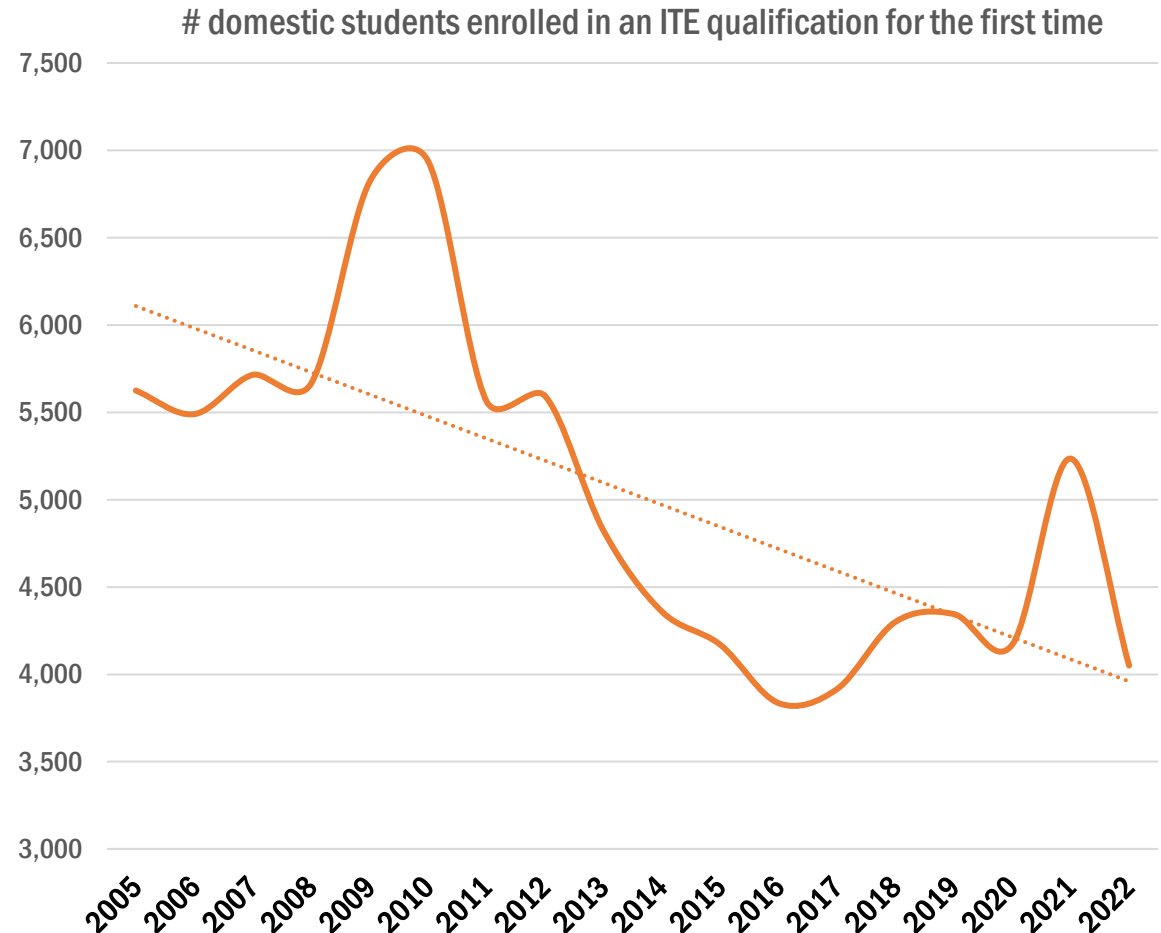
SCHOOL LEAVERS' TOP 11 DREAM CAREERS



The origins of the current teacher staffing crisis are no mystery

Domestic enrolments in ITE programmes have fallen 28% in the last 17 years.

We need to find new ways to increase the status of teachers and the teaching profession to attract future teachers.



Source: Education Counts - [Initial teacher education statistics](#) | [Education Counts](#)

Outlook and next steps



Outlook for the teaching profession to 2030

- Government has recently invested funding to address uncompetitive teacher salaries and other initiatives designed to boost teacher supply.
- Recent improvements to teacher pay and conditions are welcomed but are not in themselves the 'silver bullet' to lift the status of teaching as a profession in Aotearoa New Zealand in the long-term.
- It will take a combined all-of-education-sector response from government, education agencies, teacher unions, principal groups, and teachers themselves to address the three key findings in this research of teachers feeling underpaid, undervalued, and undermined.
- Until solutions to address all three key areas can be developed, teaching in New Zealand will continue to be a profession that is unable to fully meet the needs of our learners, whanau, and society.





Next steps

- As part of developing our new strategic priorities for the period 2024 to 2029, we're inviting key stakeholders to meet with our Governing Council on 30 November 2023.
- We are keen to hear your thoughts on what further actions the Teaching Council should be prioritising in its next strategic plan, together with partners, to address teacher perceptions of being undervalued and undermined.
- We will be consulting on the new strategic plan early 2024.

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