**Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the workplace:**

**Issues reported by wāhine Māori in the PSA**

**REPORT 1: RESULTS REPORTING**

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# Executive summary

1. This is the first of three reports on a 2020 survey of wāhine Māori who are members of the Public Service Association (PSA). The survey was completed by 919 members and covered the areas of employment, bias and discrimination, education, pay, implementing the Treaty of Waitangi in the workplace and working conditions.
2. The survey response rate was 16.4% of invited participants, made up of self-selected participants, which means that results cannot be easily generalised to the whole population, but are indicative. Qualitative comments remain valid as they are written directly by participants.
3. Wāhine Māori are, over the whole workforce, paid 22% less than pakeha males. It is therefore not surprising that only 35% of participants feel they are paid fairly and equitably. Participants may have taken much longer to achieve an equitable income or be required to carry out a range of cultural tasks that are essentially unpaid or find themselves paid less than colleagues who they advise.
4. Around 37% feel they are paid equitably for their skills. Others feel they are disadvantaged or discriminated against, not rewarded for tikanga work, penalised for challenging or questioning senior staff or forced to work in hostile environments.
5. Many participants noted that they did not know whether they were paid equitably as pay systems were opaque. In some cases, attempts by wāhine Māori to gain pay clarity were refused. Some participants were happy with their pay progression, and others were critical that wāhine Māori are under-valued for their te reo and tikanga mahi.
6. Only a quarter of participants experienced no challenges in the education system. Results were analysed by age, to demonstrate that the treatment of wāhine Māori in school has improved over the years. Older women reported being hit, suffered constant negative stereotypes, were held back and held down in the school system and/ or were not expected to succeed, or were expected to have babies early.
7. The effects of so many barriers to learning meant that many wāhine Māori in the study did not complete schooling. Many of them returned to learning much later, meaning that they got their qualifications at an older age and therefore entered into their qualified positions much later than others. This has affected their prospects for advancement and meant a much lower lifetime income than those who became qualified right out of school.
8. Many younger wāhine Māori have done much better, although still facing barriers in the system. Some of these are able to complete school and enter directly into tertiary education.
9. The school curriculum, which still (until 2021) teaches the colonialist history of Aotearoa, does not support te reo for all and some still provide accounts of bias and discrimination at school.
10. Many wāhine Māori have achieved excellent qualifications in the tertiary education system, but often under conditions of significant disadvantage.
11. Many wāhine Māori provided distressing accounts of racism in education, “from subtle to blatant”. It has changed over time. Some young wāhine Māori now find themselves called out for having some kind of unfair advantage or privilege based on their ethnicity. The attacks have altered over time but still exist.
12. The study reveals shockingly high levels of bias, discrimination and racism in the workplace. Only 18% of participants were sure they had not experienced unconscious bias. This included many judgements from others, negative assumptions about abilities, being labelled as ‘troublemakers’, denial of people’s background and experience and so on.
13. Only a quarter of participants noted they had not been the subject of conscious bias. Such bias is overt in the workplace and includes ‘sighing and eyerolling’ over Māori cultural input, talking in derogatory terms about ‘Māori’ generally with Māori staff in the room, direct racial bias in relation to promotion, ‘fake news’ about Māori issues and claiming Māori have undue advantages.
14. Thirty percent of participants stated they had not experienced discrimination as a wāhine in the workplace. One aspect, pay equity for women, was cited by many as a source of actual discrimination. Others noted that they experienced discrimination working in a male-dominated workplace, including sexist jokes, name-calling and assumptions.
15. Also, 32% noted they had not been subject to racism or discrimination as a wāhine Māori in the workplace. Of those who were, such disadvantage occurred in hiring, promotion, their work, including cultural work as a wāhine Māori and many aspects of working life. Some documented how this has affected their mental wellbeing. At least 144 comments about such discrimination were provided.
16. Finally, only a quarter of participants stated they were not subject to inequitable and unfair treatment in the workforce. Those who did identify and discuss such treatment included, as key concerns: bullying, being put down at work, poor treatment by managers, lack of pathways to promotion (including being deemed ‘unsuitable’ for senior positions) among other examples.
17. Only 27% of participants agreed that there was equitable recruitment for wāhine Māori in their workplaces. Reasons given for believing recruitment is not equitable include a lack of Māori personnel in organisations, a lack of wāhine Māori in senior positions, HR processes that do not value te reo and tikanga skills and a policy/ practice spilt.
18. Once employed within an organisation, around 34% of participants agree that wāhine Māori are encouraged into leadership positions through mentoring, training and support. For the rest, they experience being overlooked, left to their own devices and marginalised.
19. However, nearly half of the participants agree there are wāhine Māori on the board or in senior positions. But many of these noted that this often meant just one board member or senior staff, offering little support for wāhine Māori workers. Some also note that decisions are still often made by the ‘old boys club’.
20. Only a quarter of wāhine Māori therefore think that their views are sought by the leadership. Many make strong comments noting that their views are never sought. Messaging tends to be top-down rather than bottom up. This is also the case in relation to Treaty of Waitangi matters, which is discussed below.
21. Many comment that they have little cultural support and safety within the workplace. In terms of Māori cultural goals, this emerges as more of a tick-box culture than a real commitment. Wāhine Māori believe that they are continually having to spell out Māori needs and competencies.
22. Some have access to wāhine Māori support groups, or support groups for women. Some of these groups meet their needs, and others do not. However, over half of participants declare themselves to be happy in the workplace. Many have made their own spaces around them that are supportive and of good quality.
23. Nearly 60% of participants stated they had experienced unsafe, unjust or unhealthy working conditions. Being underpaid, including in Māori organisations, being undervalued personally and professionally, fighting discretionary conditions for things such as tangi leave and a failure to acknowledge cultural skills were all cited in evidence.
24. Around 42% noted they had experienced precarious, uncertain or unstable working conditions. Some had experienced precarious work during their employment histories, but far more had encountered unjust work, including working two or more jobs, to make ends meet, and the extra battles of working as a wāhine Māori with caring obligations.
25. Just on 40% of participants believed that their employers effectively implement the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in the workplace. Good treaty work goes on in many workplaces including leadership, policy, support practices, fair treatment, new competencies, training and qualifications, bringing tikanga into the organisation (e.g. a kai budget for visitors) and other practices.
26. However, participants outlined significant unevenness within organisations. While kaupapa Māori organisations often exhibit a strong pono, or genuine heart, in mainstream organisations implementation of Treaty principles could be uneven or absent, depending upon the roles of managers and staff. Sometimes tiny signals, for example the ability to answer phones with ‘kia ora’, can be important. In the end implementation of Treaty principles in organisations requires hard, sustained work by all.

# About the survey

The New Zealand Public Service Association commissioned a survey of members who are wāhine Māori on their experiences in employment. The aim of the survey was to inform the PSA’s Te Rūnanga Mana Wāhine Waitangi Tribunal claim, which challenges Treaty breaches that have led to employment inequities for wāhine Māori.

The survey was sent to those wāhine Māori who had valid email addresses registered with the PSA. A total of 5598 members were surveyed in early 2020 about their experiences of employment, bias and discrimination, education, pay, implementing the Treaty of Waitangi in the workplace and working conditions.

Some 919 members responded to the survey, a response rate of around 16.4%. While this is a relatively low rate, we were told that, within the PSA, the rate was considered high for survey responses. However, in terms of research sampling, this rate is rather low. Why did the others not respond? Did those who did not respond have roughly the same pattern of responses of those who did?

To be clear, the sample here is neither representative nor random. It has been self-selected by those who chose to respond to the survey. What drove those people to respond, and others to choose not to, is unknown to the research team and it is not possible to attribute motives to them.

While this report will outline the findings of the quantitative data collected, then, the validity and reliability of this data for all wāhine Māori in the PSA cannot be guaranteed. However, the second kind of research reported here, the qualitative comments, remain valid – these are the properly expressed views and experiences of the participants.

The result of sampling bias is that the findings cannot be generalised to all wāhine Māori who are members of the PSA. But they can certainly be reported as a sub-sample of that group.

The survey contained six major themes, and on each theme respondents were asked a series of questions for which quantitative and qualitative responses were provided. This report works through each theme in turn: pay, education, bias and discrimination, aspects of employment, working conditions and the Treaty of Waitangi.

We have focussed this report on the factors that affect wāhine Māori, and especially the many expressions of disadvantage they incur in the workplace as a result of their gender, Māori ethnicity or other factors. This report documents numerous pathways to disadvantage for wāhine Māori which, together or separately, explain differential outcomes and effectively, either singly or in combination, constitute Treaty breaches.

# Pay

Information on wāhine Māori in the public service is sparse. The State Services Commission Human Resource Capability survey has found[[1]](#footnote-1):

* Māori are employed in the public service in proportionally greater numbers than expected when compared to their participation in the labour force.
* It is likely that most Māori public servants are women.
* Māori have been consistently under-represented in leadership roles, in particular at senior levels.

Data from Statistics New Zealand provides the following information on gender pay gaps:

* The overall gender pay gap in the public service is around 17.5%.
* The overall gender pay gap (total workforce) for wāhine Māori is 22%

Despite legislation, women workers have never received equal pay with their male counterparts in Aotearoa. Even in industries which have long had equal pay in principle (e.g. teaching, medicine) male workers tend to have higher pay due to seniority, promotions and positional differences. For wāhine Māori, the position is much bleaker. Their pay is much lower than that of pakeha women.

The acknowledged best way of measuring pay rates between different groups is the average hourly rate. In June 2020, the Household Labour Force Survey recorded the average hourly earnings of women against pakeha men, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure . Average hourly rates of pay of pakeha, Māori and Pacific women as a percentage of pakeha male rates, HLFS July 2020.

It is therefore not surprising that only 35% of participants in this survey agreed that they were paid fairly and equitably compared other ethnic and gender groups. The results are shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure . Level of agreement that participants are paid fairly and equitably compared to other gender and ethnic groups

Some participants believe they are paid equitably now, but that this has not always been the case. The following quote is reflective of quite a few wāhine Māori who note they took longer to reach seniority or were diverted along the way:

Currently I am paid at the same level, but I had to spend a lot more time at the lower level to get here than my peers. I believe this is the true disparity. Those that are determined will get there but the road is harder and longer, in that time and in my examples white men will have been in the position for 5-20 years and have enjoyed all the financial and family positive benefits of higher pay and advanced opportunities.

One participant provided a detailed analysis of the situation in her organisation. A key concern is that she carries out a range of tikanga duties but receives no financial recognition for this.

I am expected to perform duties to assist in the organisation’s bicultural aspirations such as performing karanga or waiata tautoko 'as part of my job', yet am not compensated differently from someone in a similar role that is not a wāhine Māori. I work part time to manage whanau commitments, yet there are other staff who are studying towards qualifications and are paid a full time salary even though they commit much of their time to study or other professional development.

A number of participants discuss their pay in relation to that of others in the organisation. Some are responsible for managing people who are better paid than them. Others play a key role in assisting people who are better paid:

I am aware of what some other women get paid in this organisation and it is tens of thousands more than me. Colleagues often come to me for advice, and they are paid a lot more than me. Whilst I endeavour to be an accessible and supportive colleague, I am mindful of the pay disparity and that others get recognised and acknowledged for work, that without my input to support them goes unnoticed.

Many participants were not sure whether they were paid equitably or not and others commented that everyone in their role was underpaid, “Māori or not”. Others noted they were well-paid for their work or receive what they should:

I believe the options afforded wāhine Māori within the ministry are more than amicable, however as wāhine Māori we tend not to focus on pay 'e hara te kumara korero...'. with that being said we need to ensure we continue to receive remuneration for services provided.

For a wide variety of reasons, two thirds of participants did not agree they were paid equitably, compared to other people they worked with. Nearly half of these were unable to agree or disagree. Reasons given for this included: new in the position; not knowing what others were earning; all workers being paid the same; salary band currently under review; and a range of other reasons. Participants were also asked whether they were paid equitably in relation to the level of skill required for their position.

Figure . Whether participants are paid equitably and fairly in relation to their skills

Some feel they have met the requirements for promotion but have been overlooked, sometimes on many occasions. In some cases this includes those required to perform duties associated with tikanga Māori as part of their job, but not being rewarded for this:

I have struggled for some years to be paid at the Merit Step level. I work above and beyond my job description, using my knowledge of tikanga and Te Reo Māori as part of a partnership with Māori steering committee, putting together information folders to assist non-Māori staff with caring for Māori patients, also covering for ward receptionists when they are on leave. I note that there are non-Māori people who have reached this pay level with just doing what is already their job description.

A second theme in this section is those who are disadvantaged because of co-worker or manager perceptions about their approach or attitude. In a number of cases, this is exacerbated by workers challenging the decisions of senior staff. The implication is that those who are quiet and compliant will get advancement, but not those who question and challenge. This is a particular issue for wāhine Māori, who have often travelled a difficult road to gain qualification and experience, and may be older than their peers and more prepared to speak out:

I felt as a wāhine Māori I am overlooked in my skills and abilities when pay is concerned. I do feel I am disadvantaged when pay is being considered and feel this is due to team comments that have a negative connotation, my customer approach and questioning of senior decisions.

Some participants felt strongly that they worked in environments that were hostile to them:

I put myself through university as a mature student and achieved all the relevant qualifications requirements… Once I was in a job I was told it would take time to advance in the organisation as I needed experience. In my 19 years in my current role I have: been denied professional training and development opportunities that would help me advance in my profession; been overlooked for Senior Acting roles when they have become available; been ignored for a year by my manager then interrogated about my work at my performance review; never received acknowledgement of my professional skills and knowledge, my networking and collaborative work and skills across the organisation or my contributions to our clients and my team; never received a pay rise that wasn't as a result of PSA bargaining. Every other Specialist in my team (9 people) has received at least one fiscal reward for their efforts in their time with my team, and I am the only Māori staff member - go figure! I have been told that I should be grateful I have a job though!

Those happy with their pay in relation to their skills were often in organisations that paid on the basis purely of qualifications and experience, and who were not required to carry out roles additional to their job descriptions. More difficulties occurred in those organisations with widespread discretion and significant hierarchies. It may be that factors discussed below, such as bias and discrimination, actively affect pay and promotion through the filter of poor attitudes.

Figure . Whether employers have open and transparent systems in place to ensure that pay is fair and equitable

Around a third of participants felt that pay systems were open and transparent. A number commented that they were becoming more transparent over time. Pay transparency is important because there is significant international evidence that opaque pay systems support lower pay for women[[2]](#footnote-2). We were unable to find any New Zealand research on this topic, but it is likely that these factors apply here as well.

Around half of participants noted that they did not know whether they were paid fairly, as there was no pay transparency in their role or workplace, or other factors made it hard to compute their pay against other factors:

While there might be disparity, I am not aware of whether there is or not.

Pay ranges are not readily available for managers, it seems to be this big, huge secret. I don’t know if I am paid fairly or equitably as this information is not shared by my employer.

I feel that the work I do is the same as other people who have different titles which entitles them to more pay but yet we are not paid the same. I also don't know if our pay gap here is fair as we do not discuss it...

I don't know if my employer has pay equity

I don't actually know how much anyone else is paid so this was a hard one to answer.

The following quote makes a number of points. The two most relevant here are the perception that Māori advisors are paid less than non-Māori, and that, despite requests to release pay data, the organisation refuses to comply. There is also a third point: falling real income levels due to expertise not being recognised:

There is no transparency around salary progression in our organisation, and there is a perception amongst staff that the Māori specialists in the organisation are paid substantially less than our Pakeha colleagues, but they refuse to release relevant data to confirm or deny… Many times I have asked that analysis be undertaken to ensure Māori staff are paid equitably in our organisation and they have never undertaken an analysis. We have many different types of 'advisors' within one salary band, and it has been anecdotally found that the Māori Advisor is often paid less than the non-Māori advisor. I have been mentored into a leadership position in my organisation, with the ability to take on much of the work of any person within my team and advise on high level government policy issues, interacting with other agencies, but I am paid less today in inflation-adjusted terms than I was paid the day I started work here 12 years ago.

There were a wide range of responses to the questions on pay equity and transparency. Around one in five of participants agreed they were paid fairly for their skills and in relation to others, and also that pay systems were transparent. A number of these people who commented were unequivocally happy with their mahi and pay:

I returned to work in July 2019 after a holiday in Australia. A letter awaited me and it was a pay increase. I thanked my site manager and was told that I deserved the pay increase because of my valued work with [government organisation]. Thank you.

I have been employed in different jobs over the years including management. I have been paid accordingly and as I am one of the longest serving [workers] in my current position I am the highest paid. Of course, we are never truly happy with our pay scale and I know there are many who are not as secure.

Finally, two workers who were happy with their pay situation were nevertheless critical of pay systems that value those who do not understand their Tiriti obligations or do not sufficiently value te Ao Māori.

I believe I am sufficiently compensated for the mahi I do. That said, I think some of my colleagues are overpaid due to a complete absence and zero commitment to te Ao Māori worldviews. The only solution is to stop employing non-Māori who lack an understanding of their Te Tiriti obligations and/or clearly have no interest in developing bicultural knowledge or start formally acknowledging and recognising the bicultural knowledge that many Māori have.

On a holistic scale wāhine Māori carry a lot of mana, aroha, characteristics and knowledge therefore our pay should be more than what I get now.

Results in this section reflect the reality of pay inequities for wāhine Māori. These are seen to stem from a range of personal and systemic factors, such as a lack of training or promotion opportunities, a non-valuing of tikanga work within organisations, which is often not valued for pay purposes, attacks on individuals, likely bias and discrimination, lack of skill recognition and a range of other factors. Around 20% of participants felt they were getting paid equitably within their transparent organisation.

# Education

Education provides pathways to the future. In this section, wāhine Māori report on their progress through school, and in further and higher education. Nearly half of participants agreed that they experienced challenges in the education system as wāhine Māori. If the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ category is included, that figure rises to three quarters of the total.

Figure . Experienced challenges as wāhine Māori

There have been a lot of changes in the education system over the past few years, with many initiatives designed to improve the education outcomes of Māori. This should mean that the experience of challenges as wāhine Māori should have declined over time; their pathways to education should have fewer barriers. Examining the responses by age shows that challenges have reduced over time, as younger people report fewer challenges than older. The trend by age is shown here.

Figure . Proportion of wāhine Māori who agree they faced challenges in the education system, by age.

Participants were also asked whether their educational experiences adequately prepared them for employment and well-paid positions. As discussed below, many school-made barriers affected wāhine Māori, especially older people who were confronted with negative stereotypes and expectations at school. A number discuss, in qualitative comments, there being ‘professional’, ‘technical’ and ‘commercial’ (or ‘home’) streams at school, and how they were automatically, as Māori, placed in the lowest stream, with the effect of removing them from opportunities for examination success. Nevertheless, almost half of participants agreed that education did prepare them adequately for their working life.

Figure . Whether educational experiences prepared wāhine Māori for working life

The following sections outline the experiences of wāhine Māori in education in their own words.

## School

Qualitative responses were divided into experiences of school and further education, plus some general comments about racism. Around 130 people wrote specifically about their experiences at school. Many of these spoke of ‘institutional racism’ and racist treatment:

When I went to school in a South Island city during the 60s I was made aware in no uncertain terms of the colour of my skin, which I had never encountered before. I hated my colour as the horrible things that were said about my colour and the noticeably different treatment that some people treated me as. I would put powder on my face to hopefully change my colour.

A stereotype mentioned by a number of participants was that Māori girls were not worth educating as all they would do is “make babies”:

I heard comments from teachers/parents and other students for example - waste my time she will only end up pregnant and on the benefit. It was and probably still is perceived that Māori girls will be pregnant if not before by the time they leave school and end up on the benefit. Yes that did happen to some but all Māori girls were placed in that same boat.

Two of the wāhine Māori reported that they did get pregnant at school. One talked of “knowing I had added to the statistics”, and decided to change her trajectory, finishing school by correspondence and enrolling at university. Another carried on at school while her grandmother looked after the baby. She notes that while she did well at school, it was the “time spent with my grandfather growing up – attending hui, being engaged with our whenua and networking” that underpinned her current job.

Other themes included racist treatment by teachers and others, bullying, low expectations and practices and events that shortened time at school. One wāhine was refused entry to the seventh form:

The day of re-enrolment - I was 16 - called in to the Principals office and told I would not be accepted back to school – 1. because I was racist – 2. I would not get along with the majority of pupils in my year and 3. I would not get along with the majority of teachers in my year. This was a major turning point in my life - I had plans for the future and higher education aspirations - I became quite disillusioned.

Common themes included treatment worsening with age, falling achievement over time, feelings of alienation, the curriculum (especially lack of New Zealand history and te reo Māori), being put in the bottom groups, early leaving, being hit by teachers and racist stereotyping. Defying such stereotypes could be worse than putting up with them:

I attended primary and secondary school during the early to mid-1970s; and as a Māori, I was expected to be part of a technical class grouping. In those days, college was divided into Academic, Commercial (secretarial) and Technical (sewing) groupings based on sitting a college entrance test. I was put into an academic class, based on my results and went through my college life as the only Māori student in my class. As such I experienced my first real discrimination. It was terrifying. However, was from both Pakeha, who thought I had no right to be in the academic stream, and Māori, who thought I was up myself for being in the academic stream.

The treatment described above led, in many but not all cases, to direct barriers to achieving at school which translated into barriers to work. Many wāhine Māori entered further education much later than pakeha peers, affecting their progression in subsequent work.

Comments from participants suggest that younger wāhine Māori, while still facing prejudice and discrimination, have more positive experiences than older participants. The young ones face different kinds of issues than the older ones:

As a Māori I was respected by teachers but I believe we were not given the opportunity to excel in areas unless we were in a Māori stream. I was in a mainstream school with a Māori unit. I think that Māori values should've been across the board instead of segregating us to a certain class to learn about our customs and history. Lack of knowledge causes ignorance and that’s where I believe my school failed our students (age >25).

I chose to go in the ‘Commercial’ arm of education because I wanted to work in an office. The headmistress put me in the ‘Home’ course. I told my father who took me to school the next day and demanded I go into the course I had chosen. She told him I would never amount to anything. I proved her wrong when I topped the class in my first year and thereafter was a top student (age 66+).

## Tertiary education

Due to what were, for many, fragmented and winding routes towards further education, the participants described many different pathways. Once again there have been noticeable shifts in the experiences of wāhine Māori over time, from, for some “opportunities were not really available in my time as they are now”, to a much more complex nexus for some:

I've a BA and PGDip and continually was singled out as being 'Māori', being told 'You get it easy', ‘Māori have so many options', 'You're Māori, you don't even pay'. The flip side is being judged as incapable of learning/further personal education due to being 'Māori'. Constantly judged or made to feel stupid in learning situations or being treated differently.

Many of the older participants in this study recount significant gaps between schooling and tertiary education. Some of these were voluntary, such as choosing to have children first, others were caused by poor schooling outcomes, a lack of self-esteem associated with school failure, a lack of guidance and support or financial difficulties:

At college in the 1990s you would earn School Certificate which changed over to NZQA credits so I do not have credits and also I was never shown how and where to access these. I could not get into University because of this. I did not have money for University like my friends’ families. I have had to take out a student loan which I am paying back with the very little money I am making.

Various participants noted that programmes designed to bring Māori into underserved areas were used as blunt instruments to show that Māori were not really deserving of their place. There was plenty of criticism, too, of forms of racism in the tertiary classroom:

While at university people often avoided grouping up with me, with the exception of when we were covering Māori/indigenous topics (e.g te Tiriti o Waitangi). Then I would be first chosen as classmates presumed I must know everything as a Māori. Tutors were often condescending, over-explaining things to me personally (mansplaining) as if I would not be grasping it as well as peers. Lecturers often made comments which I found both sexist and racist although probably unintended.

A lack of Māori tutors had a material effect on the outcomes of some wāhine Māori in tertiary education:

I was told by tutors that the only reason I got into university was because I was Māori. I was the only Māori in my entire year at university. I made predominantly Māori work and had it marked by pakeha who didn’t understand my content and didn’t turn up to meetings I had scheduled to explain my cultural concepts. One of the markers for my final work didn’t even turn up to my final performance, and instead graded me on work they didn’t experience. My final grade of my entire 4 year degree depended on someone who was pakeha and didn’t even turn up to view my work. My work was also left out of the grad book that featured everybody’s work. I was the only one left out. They didn't understand my work and I was severely disadvantaged by that.

There is a view that young wāhine Māori are now far more likely to go straight through from school to tertiary education, meaning that the new generation may face fewer barriers to moving into senior positions in the public service. However, many continue to report prejudice and discrimination, a lack of cultural understanding and other issues.

## Racism in education

Participants recalled some significant acts and attitudes of racism that had material effects on their progress in school.

Put into and labelled as disabled and non-educated at Napier Girls High School - as Māori is my first language, English my second - I was put into a special needs class to improve my development. - I was put into detention for challenging a non-Māori teacher who was teaching Māori - as they stated I was confrontational and trouble. I was labelled an activist when I stood up for another Māori - who I felt was being humiliated by a staff in front of the class and I was suspended and removed from that class for ever.

Another recalled “racial discrimination by some in power, but mostly from other pakeha students...ranging from subtle to blatant”. Another argued that the schooling system did not prepare her for:

… sexist. racist, unequalled pay bias based upon my being a Māori wahine, doing the same or more than my male counterparts for less. No recognition of the mahi contributed, where others enjoyed promotion and perks. In reality my whole educational journey has been fraught with bias and racism from when I was 5 years old to today.

One wāhine Māori recounted the issues she had learning English after a kura kaupapa Māori education at primary school. While she mastered English, the racism she experienced “didn't just happen to me but all Māori students. We did get some support around this in school, however not a whole lot”.

Finally, one wāhine Māori provides a scathing critique of her biased and cruel schooling experience:

As a child I was hit by my teachers for no apparent reason - my earliest experience of being hit was when I was 5 but it didn’t stop at that age. I have been insulted by teachers since primary school through to college. I have been told I’m lazy. I was treated so badly at school that I at the age of 10 ended up refusing to go. My mother enrolled me in correspondence school and I was left at home to teach myself with my books from correspondence school. I did much better as a result of not having to go to school. Teachers were openly racist and derogatory. Expectations of Māori girls were extremely low. I ended up extremely depressed and dropped out of school and tried to commit suicide. Even though I was a bright student, no teachers or institutions asked if I was ok. I only went university when I was an adult and when I had rebuilt the fortitude to deal with study and work.

Less than half of participants commented about their educational experiences, so the statements above do not reflect the majority view. But they are a significant minority view, showing the multiple ways in which wāhine Māori experienced disadvantage in the education system. Over time, the numbers experiencing such disadvantage have fallen from around 57% to 40%, and the forms of disadvantage have changed too. Instead of being attacked as a lazy girl, and hit for being naughty, the younger wāhine Māori report they are more likely to be attacked for having privilege (generally imagined rather than real) based on their race. Such attacks are as likely to have material effects on wāhine Māori as earlier ones.

# Bias and discrimination

Bias is about making distinctions based on a person’s characteristics, and it can be conscious or unconscious. Unconscious bias is much more prevalent than conscious bias, although both arise from views held about people or groups. Unconscious bias is that which participants judged perpetrators to be unaware of, that which may have been exercised through ignorance rather than deliberate or malicious intent. But there is little difference for the recipient of the bias whether it is unconscious or conscious. It is still bias and it can still have material effects. Participants were asked whether they had experienced any of the following in the workplace: unconscious bias; conscious bias; discrimination or racism as Māori; discrimination as wāhine; or unfair or inequitable treatment.

The following five figures report the findings of this question. In each case, examples are used to illustrate how the participants see various types of bias.

Figure . Experiences of unconscious bias in the workplace.

More than two-thirds of participants reported having experienced unconscious bias in the workforce, while a further 14% were unsure. Less than one out of five were clear they had not been the victim of unconscious bias. For many, what they perceive as unconscious bias is a bombardment of small everyday comments that, together, undermine the mana of the wāhine Māori. The follow example illustrates this kind of bias:

It got particularly worse when I received my moko kauae, where the negative attitudes were amplified. I would be told things like: It that real? Why would you do that? That could limit your career opportunities. Other comments would include: you are too young for management, not enough experience; Māori girls from that town just want to be mothers and nothing more; or, you’re too young to have children that old. This is only the tip of what I have been exposed to as well.

A disturbing trend was noticed in the comments whereby Māori staff could quite easily be labelled as troublemakers and suffer as a result. This is especially true when challenging racism:

To my and many other Māori females’ detriment, we have been pushed aside by non-Māori management for people who will not make waves, [or] challenge which is why this department is not progressing well with Māori.

Other participants felt they were labelled as ‘troublemakers’ just for trying to talk about issues that affected them or bringing different perspectives into the workplace. In the comment below, a woman is prevented from talking about her (important) life experience by her colleagues, as if it is a taboo topic. She ends up silenced and resentful, her experience written off as too hard, to controversial, to be discussed openly:

The thing that offends me the most is the dismissing of my entire life, upbringing and viewpoint. For example; Māori have notoriously high statistics in negative social outcomes (poor health/higher rates of crime, drug use, suicide, violence, unemployment etc.,) and my life was no different. As a wāhine Māori I was on the same path that has led to many of those statistics. I grew up in a whānau filled with domestic violence, drug use, poverty (and yes there was lots of love too). I was exposed to drugs/ alcohol/ cigarettes/ violence at an early age and had terribly poor chronic health problems as a child (leading me to pursue a career in health). I lived in an overcrowded home and was around gangs and the behaviour that comes along with it.

Unconscious bias is, for many participants, a constant companion that limits their ability to work effectively with colleagues and undermines their confidence or wellbeing. Conscious bias, on the other hand, can act to affect the person’s ability to do their work. While it is visible, it often occurs in settings or interactions that makes it difficult to challenge.

Figure . Experiences of conscious bias in the workplace

Fewer participants reported experiencing conscious bias rather than unconscious, but still six out of ten noted its occurrence, and only a quarter reported no such bias.

Examples of conscious bias are often exhibited as points of difference and resistance, for example when wāhine Māori work with staff on making workplaces culturally safe:

Body language says a lot; particularly when trying to bring in tikanga practices into the workplace. E.g. sighing/looking away/eyes-rolling when guests say their mihi, or when we are asked to do a karakia or sing a waiata.

Sitting in tea room where non Māori staff talking about Māori this and Māori that until I told them they were talking about my father and my grandmother etc. PSA trying to incorporate the Treaty into documents. Non-Māori staff and managers rude comments in front of Māori staff, Māori staff took a letter with all signatures to management and were told we were out of order. One non-Māori staff member came to work wearing chicken bone around his neck when there was going to be a powhiri in the office.

Conscious and unconscious bias can also occur when there is a perception that the person deviates from some norm. One person commented that she never knew why she was subject to bias – was it because she was Māori, a woman or gay? Participants told of gatekeepers, often in middle layers of management, who maintained certain norms that excluded wāhine Māori from particular positions:

I want to be a manager but because the one who hires manager has the last say. He will never allow me to progress higher than where I'm now. He's pakeha and middle aged, and wants leaders to be like him or you don't go through to high management levels. I can never be that manager, I can only be myself.

Another aspect of either conscious or unconscious bias (depending on whether the person believes it) is ‘fake news’. Participants gave a number of examples of this. For example, the status of Māori as an official language is often denied (one person told a participant it was a ‘dead language’, causing offence). Others make a range of comments usually of the type such that “Māori can do this…. And pakeha cannot”. These are untruths fuelled by direct bias.

Slightly fewer participants reported discrimination than conscious bias (but only by 1%). Discrimination differs very slightly from bias, in that it requires acting upon views rather than merely having them. Participants reported numerous forms of discrimination, from being treated differently in the workplace, having different (and worse) working conditions, cultural trauma, lower pay, being overlooked for promotion, etc.

Figure . Experiences of discrimination as a wāhine in the workplace.

Few comments related to discrimination purely on the basis of gender, although a number of comments did cover pay equity as a form of discrimination. It is obvious, however, that most wāhine Māori who responded to this question have experienced discrimination on the basis of gender. Several participants noted that women workers tended to be judged on their appearance and clothing. Working in a male-dominated workplace also at times led to a clash of values:

I was newly appointed and arrived in my new post; no one knew of me and I felt I was automatically an outsider. I had stolen one of their appointments. I was a female working in a male environment and I was a Māori woman. My values were very different e.g. I didn't go hunting. I didn't drink and I was very happy spending my off time with family rather than bonding with my male colleagues. I put up with the subtle innuendos, sarcasm and bullying e.g. being called 'Doris', being ignored, walking into a room and it suddenly goes quiet, sexist jokes, you are a credit to your race blah blah blah.

One participant notes that she tends to hide her Māori status in the workplace to avoid racism and discrimination, but still find unfairness as a woman:

The larger portion of bias, discrimination, and other unfair treatment I have experienced in the workplace has been more centred around my wāhine status, rather than my Māori status.

Figure . Discrimination or racism as a wāhine Māori in the workplace.

Many examples of discrimination as a wāhine Māori were provided that indicated underlying racism or racist values. A number of participants discussed discriminatory practices which interfered with the employment and promotion of wāhine Māori:

It appears that Europeans of equal merit/status move up the ladder faster than Māori. Often we do not have Māori on employment or other panels when hiring staff, even when some of the applicants are Māori.

An incident described where a plan for Māori engagement, which a person spent months working on, became watered down to a ‘cultural advisor’ position which she did not get, and:

…the person who got the job was not of Māori descent - there probably were other Māori Wāhine who would’ve applied for the job too. Even if someone else with Māori descent got it better at the job than me I would've been very happy.

For the following wāhine, her place is seen as last in line, and she is expected to merely put up with workplace racism:

There is this expectation that I will do more because it’s a part of my caring culture to do so. I've often gone last or made to stand when there are no seats because of this hierarchy. I'm constantly having to address racist comments and behaviours, being told I'm too sensitive or that the insults are humour. What I find as a wāhine Māori is if I try to progress my career, I'm somehow getting preferential treatment but non Māori success is expected and celebrated. I always feel I need to wait in line or not forget my place.

In some cases, participants talked about how workplace experiences have affected their wellbeing and confidence:

Mental health issues which have gotten worse, no longer have confidence in abilities, anxiety each day when travelling to work, medication increase including cancer drugs, paranoia over being watched at work (this is due to new manager being aware of everything I do even when out of office), miserable and loss of mana. I am of Māori and Pakeha descent. I am fair like my father’s side of the family. I was told I could not go to a Māori nurses study day as I am not Māori. I have had other nurses tell me its Māori nurse’s day every day and its unfair that we get our own study days and I shouldn't be going to them. I have had other nurses say to me 'why would you want to do that shit' (Māori health and education) 'it's not going to get you anywhere and you won’t use it anyway so why bother to go'. I have had to defend myself and who I am and feel that I have had to give explanations around what I'm doing... I'm sick of hearing things like 'why do they keep moaning about the Treaty they should just get over it and move on', the reality is it has significant impact and implications on how people live and experience their lives today based on what happened then around the signing and coming forward through the generations. It is still relevant.

In other cases, wāhine Māori are able to resist the effects of racist discrimination by using the mantle of their Māori knowledge as a cloak to protect them:

Māori get discriminated against to make us feel inadequate in our job and environment. I come with knowledge of my tikanga and kawa to use in a high-profile work environment to make a difference and keep me safe.

Discrimination in the workplace can take many forms. At least 144 participants used the survey to provide examples of discriminatory words or actions experienced in the workplace. One person commented that “they could write a PhD” on this topic.

It took me 5 years of not giving up on what I knew to be right, to stand up for myself about the unfair and disrespectful way I was treated. Eventually, with the help of the PSA, I was heard and my point of view was acknowledged – along with the amount of evidence I had about me and my high work performance, and the evidence I had about the poor behaviour going on with two people in the office (one being a white male manager, the other being a white female administrator). While I got a letter of apology in the end, I should never ever have been subjected to the disrespect and stress that I was subjected to. The apology in writing helped to restore my mana, and relationship with the employer.

Other examples include positions not achieved, teams not welcoming, racist comments from peers and clients and many other examples. Many experienced numerous actions and comments but did not feel able to complain in the workplace context:

It’s too huge to say here, many examples, over the years, absolutely tiresome and overwhelming and exhausting at times. When you speak up you get marginalised, and very scary. It isn’t safe to speak up.

Many of these comments include similar themes of racism, discrimination and marginalisation in the workforce which comes with real material and emotional effects for wāhine Māori. They have literally had to bear the burden of institutional and racial discrimination, and far too often the ‘victims’ have been blamed.

Figure . Unfair or inequitable treatment.

A number of examples of unfair or inequitable treatment have already been provided in the sections above. Comments around unfairness were common in the survey, containing either specific examples or more general reflections:

I have become used to being treated unfairly and I find it very hard to form trusting relationships with anyone that is not culturally sensitive.

Many of the comments about unfair or inequitable treatment related to instances where the staff member complained about experiences in the workplace. From the comments noted, it rarely worked out well for the person to make a complaint. In many, many examples, nothing changed as a result, and often there was a ‘blame the victim’ mentality:

When I was being bullied by my workmates and Team Leader I raised a personal grievance and attended mediation where the mediator was a white male and told me he thought I had a big ego. My Team Leader micromanaged me, didn't offer me any development opportunities and allowed other workmates to continuously bully me until I passed out at work and was sick for around 6 months. The stress took it's toll on my health and the issue has still not been dealt with properly.

More particularly, wāhine Māori are liable to be labelled unsuitable for senior positions if they challenge the dominant culture:

Traditionally there has always been a culture where the bias/discrimination etc has been the norm. This culture is changing slowly, but nothing changes if we don't stand together and speak out. I have been in situations before where my suitability for a position was overlooked due to the fact that I speak up - generally, and do not just accept unfairness.

The participants also tend to become inured to multiple experiences of unfairness. As one person put it:

You tend to just brush things off and try and get over the racism, unfairness, biased comments etc and try even more to prove yourself. A lot of people do 'joke' about things e.g. Māori are 'dumb' 'paru' 'poor' 'at risk' and we have labels put on us.

Bias, discrimination, racism and unfair treatment appear in many forms in the workplace, affecting every aspect the work of wāhine Māori.

# Aspects of employment

There were a variety of issues raised in respect of being wāhine Māori in employment with PSA organisations. In some workplaces the workforce was largely Māori and the focus of work was with Māori communities and whānau. In others, Māori staff were scarce and Māori culture described as unacknowledged, almost invisible or under-valued.

## Recruitment of wāhine Māori

Around a quarter of participants agreed that wāhine Māori were equitably recruited into their organisation and many were neutral on this question. Responses are shown in Figure 13 below.

Figure . Whether employer has policies and processes to ensure that wāhine Māori are equitably recruited.

Many participants commented about the lack of wāhine Māori in their organisations. One said: “I see Māori being overlooked for jobs in the health sector all around the roopu.” Another asked:

“Why are we not hiring Māori? Or why are Māori not applying for these government jobs? Maybe that is the more appropriate question here?”

Where positions are specifically within a Māori -focussed organisation or unit, Māori skills and knowledge are recognised. But the situation is more complex in other organisations which, while asserting the importance of te reo and tikanga in policy, may fail to value those skills in practice:

Capability Frameworks denote Tikanga and Te Reo as being important although most staff don't have the skills. I queried why they were listed and was advised by HR that they were 'aspirational'.

We noted a recurring theme in participant responses of policy/practice disjuncture within agencies at different levels and different departments (especially the role of HR in interpreting employment guidelines for positions). This is one way in which strong policies of Māori recruitment in policy are defeated in practice. A lack of wāhine Māori in positions of leadership contributes to this situation.

## Training, promotion and wāhine Māori in leadership

Survey participants were divided over whether wāhine Māori were provided with training and promotion opportunities, with around a third noting agree, equivocal or disagree.

Figure . My employer has encouraged wāhine Māori into positions of leadership through mentoring, training and support for career advancement.

In comments, a large number of wāhine Māori expressed dismay about the lack of systems and encouragement, a lack of opportunity, lost hopes, bias, a failure of leadership overall. The following quote expresses the experience of one wāhine Māori, which also encapsulates a number of trends noted by others:

I have consistently experienced being overlooked when it comes to career opportunities. I have watched my colleagues get supported by management and put forward for training, development and career enhancing and promotion opportunities, while I am expected to self-select and do it on my own. I am called upon frequently to provide Māori advice and help with te reo and tikanga Māori but do not receive acknowledgement for this as it is just 'part of my role'. I am one of the most experienced specialists [professional position] in my team with a specialist clientele area and yet I sit near the bottom of the pay range for my grade amongst my peers. It is incredibly frustrating and disheartening giving your all to your clients and your organisation day in and day out every year and every year being told you have just not done enough to quite make the mark. Meanwhile people that have only been in the profession for 5 minutes are getting pay rises for doing the same work that you have been doing for years…!

 Gender inequalities in the workforce compound those of ethnicity for some:

There are 6 roles above 'advisor' and they are all held by men, except one Manager position, that my female colleague was promoted to last month, and they downgraded the job title from Manager to Team Leader with her appointment.

In a relatively strong positive response, around half of participants reported that there were wāhine Māori on the board or in senior leadership positions within the organisation, as shown in Figure 15.

Figure . Wāhine Māori on the board or in senior positions

Many participants qualified their positive response to this question by noting that the situation needs to be improved:

There is one wāhine Māori on the Board. i.e. one Māori Board member only. There are no other Senior level Māori wāhine or tane holding a position at senior level. There is a Kaiwhakahaere Māori position available at third tier manager level (operational).

As a result, some felt a strong need for more wāhine Māori in senior leadership positions:

When I need a boost, I tend to reach out to my fellow wāhine Māori who I can relate to in a way that leaves me feeling validated and respected - otherwise there's no forum which provides this where I work. Would be great if my employer had specific development programmes to enhance Māori leadership and specifically for wāhine to increase these faces at senior management level. This would also help promote mentoring programmes which we don't have. Hence there are very few role models for wāhine Māori in my work to provide inspiration and aspiration.

Some noted that having women in senior positions was not enough in some organisations:

Our workplace is still ruled by 'the old boys club' to a certain extent. Though woman are well represented in senior management, the underlying decisions are still governed and managed by older European males who have been in the organisation for years.

Figure . Whether the leadership seeks the views of wāhine Māori

In one of the strongest negative responses, only one quarter of participants felt that their organisation’s leadership actively sought the views of wāhine Māori. Many participants felt disheartened because their advice and views were frequently overlooked, ignored or denigrated:

I have had my views blatantly ignored or dismissed.

My manager and management team isolate, bully, undermine Māori staff and inadequately deal with cultural needs of Wāhine Māori at work and their Māori practice with whanau. I was told today by my supervisor to stop looking at things from a Māori lens when I was discussing with him a Māori whanau on my caseload.

## Cultural support and safety

Those working within kaupapa Māori teams, services or organisations spoke positively of their experiences of cultural support in their workplaces.

Always feel culturally supported in my new role under a Māori Health Organisation. Feeling Blessed.

Others, working in mainstream organisations had quite different experiences.

I don't feel like I am valued as a wāhine Māori in this workplace, I merely … tick a box now and again for the employer.

Employer has very little knowledge of Tikanga Māori to be able to support wāhine Māori and due to the lack of acknowledgement of the importance for Māori leadership we will continue to be marginalised and oppressed.

Participants note that they are often only acknowledged when there is a need to carry out tikanga work, often outside the job description, or when they make a complaint and “sometimes it may be deemed that we are trouble makers and we need to know 'our place'”.

Māori staff are often used to cover for cultural experience and understandings above and beyond their work loads. These are not paid positions and rely on the good will and support of staff who go beyond and above.

One person raised wider issues about the cultural make-up of the workplace:

There are definitely no support networks for Māori women where I am situated, however, once again we are a minority, I could count on almost one hand how many Māori women work across my office.

Many commented on a lack of systems to provide cultural safety in the workplace:

I am happy in myself within my workplace and I have the support of my administration colleague and feel safe with them but as an organisation I don't believe there are any networks in place that keep me culturally safe.

## A ‘tick-box’ culture

Some participants are very sceptical about their role in the workplace as ‘token Māori’. They often feel that they have been employed to make up the cultural numbers and make the organisation look good. They see little real commitment to change, especially in some large organisations.

A number of participants spoke of what they called a ‘tick box’ mentality.

Policies are in place, but I feel like they are box ticking and not actively promoting their policies

Sometimes it seems as if I wasn't there, would they think about that viewpoint at all? It's like a check box for some people. But I think things are changing.

The process of the employer maybe that they should be acting on all of the above but, the reality of it all is that they are more worried about their tick boxes.

Many of the comments in this section call out the organisational commitment to Māori in the workplaces. One person noted that "right at the top level" there does appear to be a commitment, but that middle management often do not follow through. Messages get lost or muddled. Bias and discrimination emerge. Social inequalities intrude.

The tick box culture is seen to prevent any real change. The main effect of this is that the organisation engages with Māori on its own terms. A number of examples of this were given, such as the following:

I have been a part of the national Women in Leadership programme, which mainly focuses on white-women ideologies and does not provide opportunities for wāhine Māori to advance in their careers. Many of us have had to find our own opportunities and work extra hard to advance in our careers with minimal/no support from the institution. Those that speak up and challenge end up leaving.

The implications for individual wāhine Māori of the tick box culture is that they are often forced into tokenistic models that gives them more work in leading tikanga and te reo opportunities without leading to lasting change or, in many cases, personal advancement.

## Networks of support in the workplace

Participants were asked whether there were support networks for wāhine Māori, and women, in the workplace. Responses indicate that there are slightly more likely to be support networks for women generally (3.20/5) than for wāhine Māori (3.04/5). Some people commented that support groups for women tended to be primarily “business orientated, dominated by white women, and do not address issues that affect the women most in need”. Characteristics of support networks for wāhine Māori is that they tend to be set up by the workers rather than the organisation, they are relatively sparse, support is often individualised through access to counselling, or the support networks exist but are not helpful:

There is a number of support networks in place, however, none of these have assisted me to get any promotion or have supported me to move forward with my career despite my being qualified, experienced and competent to do so.

## A safe happy workplace based on wellbeing

One of the strongest responses to the quantitative questions was when asked whether participants were happy in the workplace. Of the 889 who responded, 499 agreed or strongly agreed they were happy, compared to 143 who disagreed/ strongly disagreed. While this may seem to contradict earlier responses, all of the comments supporting their happy role came with caveats. Many were happy despite, not because of, the workplace. The following participant has found her happy place within the organisation, in a position that has significant autonomy, but is still:

While I feel happy in my workplace it is because I have adapted my situation to make myself happy. I am fortunate to be in a role that is reasonably self regulating. I feel I could do a lot more if my manager respected my abilities and provided support and opportunity. I have on a number of occasions asked for development opportunities but not encouraged or denied them [by manager]. Sometimes I think it is because he doesn't want me to advance beyond him.

Several people noted they were happy in their particular site or work group, but not in the wider organisation. Others acknowledge the contradiction in their responses:

My answers may be conflicting but 1) I am happy in my role as I still work with Māori, gives me satisfaction; 2) Managers and leaders in the South Island are either unconsciously or consciously biased.

Several participants noted that they were unhappy in their workplace and, as with this quote, often for strong material reasons: “I am unhappy in my workplace due to my position being downgraded to the lowest paying band”.

Participants mostly felt that workplaces were culturally safe and allowed wāhine Māori to participate without shame, discrimination or bias (most participants focused on shame issues).

I would like to note that I keep myself culturally safe within my workplace (not my employer), that I also take care of my own holistic wellbeing in the workplace, and I ensure I have a work-life balance, as wāhine Māori have more than just work / life, we also have specific cultural obligations that also impacts of the 'life' part of work / life. I ensure this by reminding everyone that for every cultural engagement at work, I have two or three of the same in my personal life.

I don't always feel culturally safe as a wāhine Māori in my workplace. I've had pakeha leaders make jokes about me being a 'white Māori' with the implication that I'm not a real Māori. I sometimes feel too whakama to use te reo Māori because I wonder how I'll be judged.

Several others commented on issues around the use of te reo generating feelings of whakama or shame. One person noted that she always waited until last to speak and ensured she would do a full mihi and pepeha: “I wanted to speak my reo without feeling shame”.

# Working conditions

Participants in the study listed a wide range of comments about their working conditions. Many note that have experienced good conditions in the workplace, whether a Māori led agency or not:

Thankfully I have experienced nothing bad during my times being employed being a Māori wāhine. I have been respected and encouraged by not only my team mates but my employers also.

The participants in this study were very likely, however, to have experienced unsafe, unjust or unhealthy working conditions, with nearly 60% stating that they had.

Figure . Agreement that they have experienced unsafe, unjust or unhealthy working conditions

This topic was very broad and many of the issues raised are covered in other sections of this report. For example, participants frequently stated that they were underpaid for their work. Some of this they put down to being wāhine Māori, but some that they were in jobs that were undervalued for all.

One new point raised under this question related to the pay in Māori health organisations, compared to DHBs. This woman was forced into working more than one job while working in Māori organisations. After she got a qualification, she moved into a hospital setting in order to get more pay and have better prospects:

I have worked in Māori health and the pay was crap as the funding was crap. Retention of qualified /good staff was almost impossible as people had to move on to better paying jobs to make ends meet. I worked more than one job whilst at all these jobs to make ends meet but stayed for the betterment of Māori people as a whole. Moving to the DHB (after studying for my qualification) was a necessary move to be able to repay student loan debt and be able to have money to save for a house. I automatically got $3 extra an hour on starting and there is a pay scale to look forward to.

Another point not clearly articulated elsewhere in the report is the feeling that aspirations are blunted, and expectations low, for wāhine Māori:

In private practice you are seen as most probably not bright enough to fulfil the role. In hospital seen as “well this is your lot and as good as your career will go”.

Another participant also came up against others’ limiting views and assumptions about her, when “I first started working at the DHB people and staff presumed I was a cleaner or worked in the kitchen and not as an administrator.”

A participant also noted that, in her organisation, special leave, including tangi leave, is discretionary, meaning that she is always forced to fight for the right to meet her cultural needs. In her case, she was forced to bring the PSA in to negotiate for her.

Finally, an issue raised earlier in this report is brought up as a significant injustice:

You’re not 'equally' or on the same 'pay level' as someone else doing the same job. I have another different skill set e.g. te reo Māori they don't even acknowledge you, or thank you, only when it suits the employer, you maybe then asked to translate perhaps, or attend a hui and speak te reo Māori on the employer's behalf.

Another question asked participants to consider whether they had experienced precarious, uncertain or unstable working conditions. This included being unable to find work or being unemployed. Responses are shown in the following figure.

Figure . Agreement that they have experienced precarious, uncertain or unstable working conditions.

Participants were far less likely to have experienced precarious work than unjust work, although four out of ten still agreed that they had definitely experienced such problems. It is notable that few comments were made that indicate that work was precarious or unstable. Comments included a person who spent a long time on temporary work, before a permanent position came through and another on ACC ‘light duties’ forced to do work that aggravated her injury (when she told her doctor, she was put on ACC full time until her operation).

A number of participants noted through the survey that they were forced to take on secondary jobs to make ends meet. This is quantified in the final question in this section, outlined in the figure below:

Figure . Had to work overtime or in more than one position to make ends meet

Nearly half of participants (46%) noted that they did have to do extra work to make ends meet, sometimes working more than two jobs, despite also having tamariki to care for.

It should be noted that some participants did overtime because their workload was so high, rather than because they needed to make ends meet:

Working with very high workloads, consistently working overtime to complete priority tasks, but leaving each day without having completed all that needs to be done.

Low pay which didn't allow for minimum living costs to be met - this appears to have stabilised a bit with the minimum living wage increasing to 42k annually, however overall prices continue to push that margin yearly. Unstable work conditions - my previous employer decided to offshore a large part of the work we did which cost 50 people their jobs and created an unhealthy work environment and severe stress. I was also let go due to a call centre closing in Christchurch as the work was moved to Auckland. It took me almost a year from when my study finished to secure that particular job and the pay did not merit the effort I put in on a daily basis.

## Working as a wāhine with caring obligations

Many of the participants had a range of caring roles that they noted in passing as mothers and members of whanau. Such obligation arose from a range of sources and often quite complex whanau relationships. The survey did not ask about the relationship between employment and other responsibilities, but many commented on this.

Participants noted that, in order to meet their employment obligations, they had to “cart the children in and out of the office in order to work late”, “leave the teenager at home with the baby” when on the late shift, or being penalised when applying for other positions:

I have been penalised when applying for other positions within the company due to having to take time off for my sick dependant, child. As a solo parent I feel penalised and discriminated against for having a young child.

One wāhine Māori noted she was asked in a job interview whether she had ever needed to take time off work to look after a sick child. Some participants choose to work part time due to their family commitments, but some do not have that choice and find themselves unable to meet all their obligations at work and in the whanau:

Because of my choice to care for my family and work, there are not always many options for part time work and flexibility around the family. Being able to attend children's prize giving is sometimes not okay and even attending tangi for close friends due to staff shortages.

While many organisations offer the right to tangihanga leave, it is not always straightforward to get access to it. Wāhine Māori report “being questioned when requesting leave”, “justifying why I have connections to whanau, hapū and iwi and why we have tangihanga”. One woman stated:

Working for an iwi organization, where non-Māori women supervisors fail to recognize staff community responsibilities at tangi or marae and expect you to return to work the next day to give 100% at work. Unsafe practice, and not willing to find the correct policy to support the staff member.

While these aspects were not part of the official questions for this study, it is evident that wāhine Māori face significant stresses in navigating the whanau/work/wāhine responsibilities that they have.

# Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Participants were asked whether their employers effectively implement the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the relationship with wāhine Māori employees.

Figure . Whether employers effective implement the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi in the workplace.

This question brought up a wide range of responses. Forty percent agree that Te Tiriti is effectively implemented, 30% were not sure and 29% thought treaty principles were not implemented.

A large number of participants reported on good treaty work being carried out in the workplace. This includes work going on within organisations, leadership, policy, support practices, fair treatment, new competencies, training and qualifications, bringing tikanga into the organisation (e.g. a kai budget for visitors) and other practices. One wāhine Māori described what had been going on in her workplace, although, as she notes, not necessarily the wider agency:

Note: my employer to me is my manager not the [agency]. I can definitely tell you that you won’t be getting the same responses for other managers. This is what I will be basing my responses on. We do multiple things - recruitment of new staff - honest with agencies that we want more Māori and Pacific applicants, interview process, character based, has components of tatai pou in there and we talk about their knowledge of Māori and Pacific, and what their understandings of Te Tiriti are as part of the criteria. All staff are to do tatai pou workshops, do the Treaty of Waitangi course, have the opportunity to do te reo classes and participate in what they want to do professionally. We have culture month with Samoan month for November. It’s a rotation between Māori, Tongan, Samoan and now Tokelau. We also have waiata and karakia at the start of every meeting and all staff members are to learn their pepeha. We do pronunciation activities in team meetings so that our staff are pronouncing Māori names correctly. Ultimately, our manager is a whanau person and mama herself. Across our team it is upfront that whanau and your children come first always.

A number of participants note that over time, quite tokenistic effects have been improved to now be about ‘pono’ (a genuine heart, as one participant put it). For those working within kaupapa Māori organisations, there is a strong commitment to te Tiriti and to partnership relationships, as well as tino rangatiratanga.

There is a sense that many of the initiatives described within organisations are uneven, especially as managers can either promote or ignore Tiriti practices:

I can state that the CE actively promotes partnership, participation, protection, equity and rangatiratanga and we have had these discussions, through other Leaders within [agency], regarding the relationship with wāhine Māori employees. However, the CE can lead a horse to water but he cannot make other Managers and Team Leaders support his kaupapa effectively. A lot of restructuring may or may not execute his long term plans. He has been instrumental in finding out why Māori employees are leaving or not achieving their goals and aspirations. I respect him.

It is interesting that the smallest things can signal the wellbeing of Tiriti relationships within the workplace. One person, the only Māori working with nine pakeha, noted in a response that she has been told off for answering the phone ‘kia ora’. Several people commented on the value of having a professional cultural advisor in the workplace, with one noting:

Having a Māori cultural advisor implementing training in tikanga, Treaty of Waitangi, Māori concepts, karakia, waiata, the use of Māori kupu at reception – Kia ora when answering the telephone.

Participants also note that there are still significant problems of tokenism, inappropriate cultural appropriation and racism within organisations, even while Treaty goals are being pursued:

Our kupu is all over our intranet as headings and they are mispronounced, desecrated, disregarded and disrespected. No-one even tries to pronounce our kupu correctly. Unconscious bias or whatever the buzz word is for racism is rife throughout some of our offices and more needs to be done about cultural awareness. I know that now that I have brought my story forward, they are certainly looking into how to implement something...not sure what that looks like as yet but I am in contact with those who want to make change which is cool.

Other comments indicate a range of problems, gaps and missteps in implementing Treaty-driven workplaces. The following selection of participant views captures many of the issues:

We claim to be a Crown Entity that follows a bi-cultural model, the veneer is more palatable than the truth.

Unfortunately, it all feels very 'tickbox' and/or tokenistic. They attempt to incorporate principles of Te Tiriti, but from a non-Māori worldview, resulting in sometimes uneducated and inappropriate wording, procedure, or actions.

The cultural work is left to wāhine Māori employees

One perspective asks whether the wāhine Māori themselves benefit from moves by workplaces to become Treaty led. In some cases, there seems to be no benefit at all, which raises the question of what the changes are for:

There is nil support from my employer for Te Tiriti issues. - Even though there is a tangihanga clause in my contract, I have been refused bereavement leave as it is ‘not fair to other staff’ who do not attend tangihanga. I have prepared, set up and run and catered powhiri. I later found out that the kaikorero received double payment than me, even though he only did a short five-minute speech then left.

Lots of the right kupu/korero (nowadays, was not always the case), but another thing to put into consistent action. Still feels like an afterthought rather than business as usual. Building an inclusive and diverse institutional culture is still in early development. After years of professional practice, I still feel like I am overlooked for promotion and untrustworthy to have a role with a budget.

It is particularly interesting that Treaty or Tiriti implementation within employer organisations is nearly always referred to by participants as being by ‘them’ onto ‘us’. Processes appear to be top down in organisations and, in some cases at least, were undertaken without consultation with wāhine Māori staff. This means that the concerns and input of wāhine Māori employees may not be taken into account:

They're switching their focus more to try and implement the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi but still need to work out processes. There is no system in place for monitoring and assessing inequities faced by wāhine Māori employees because I don't think they understand it enough.

Many organisations now officially incorporate principles of the te Tiriti o Waitangi or the Treaty of Waitangi within their policies and processes. However, a number of participants stress that have the policy implemented is not enough. It is what happens afterwards that is important.

Although my employer implements the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi there is actually no monitoring to ensure these principles are actually being implemented on site.

My current line manager and her co senior staff do not follow the protocols and principles of the DHB. He kauanuanu - Respect, was a very big disappointment as I witnessed and endured bullying, belittling and negative behaviours. Passing comments to each other both direct and indirectly referring to my work performance in front of me also impacts and evidence that there was no respect both personally and culturally.

Te Tiriti was implemented into policy and procedure employment charter. But is physically and mentally used as a manipulative weapon against Māori. To be ashamed, of my culture. I would never ever work in any mental health co, again. I fear it.

A number of participants noted that an organisation cannot just declare that it is treaty-based organisation. In order to achieve Treaty principles, a lot of work has to be put into the organisation in terms of training, leadership and planning. Comments included:

Importance of training making it compulsory carrying through etc. Initiatives cannot just be done once.

My organisation says that they are bicultural and respect the treaty but there is no funding or training put into implementing this on the ground.

At my site there are no Māori wāhine in any positions of management. We have very few Māori on site though the majority of our whanau that we work with are Māori. There is an expectation that those of Māori descent are the experts in their culture and knowledge and should be guiding the site in terms of processes and all thing Māori but for me I don't get paid for that and I don’t work in isolation from my hapu and iwi ...the site tries to sidestep the fact that the leaders of our site need to go out and build relationships with hapu and iwi....

Finally, one person outlines how an organisation can be more effectively aligned to meeting treaty goals, but also noting (a) that it depends a little on the personnel and leadership and (b) also on the government of the day.

It really depends on the government of the day. Under Labour I see a very strong commitment to Te Tiriti and also to the revitalisation strategy for Te Reo. We now have a Māori action plan and our future focus, principles etc are articulated in te reo. Under national this was non-existent. We have a CE who is strongly aligned to taha Māori and a DCE who is fluent in te reo me ona tikanga. We also now have an acting DCE solely focussed on Māori, Communities and Partnerships group which is responsible for building capability to support the aspirations of Māori and connecting and collaborating to build effective partnerships and community approaches. Within our Ministry we also have Principal Māori Advisors. Unfortunately, our direct manager/leader also swings whichever way the govt does. Strong leaders would have a strong commitment to Māori no matter who is in govt!

It is evident that many agencies in which PSA wāhine Māori work have, in recent times, sought to incorporate the principles of the te Tiriti o Waitangi or theTreaty of Waitangi into their workplace. Four out of ten participants found this to be a good process, with some effective outcomes. Others, while supporting the goal and noting the intent of agencies, claim that the outcomes have not improved resolved issues in their workplaces.

1. https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/public-service-workforce-data/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This topic has been well-researched in the USA and Canada. One recent paper is Baker, M et al (2019) Pay transparency and the gender gap. NBER working paper series, Mass. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)