

# Decent Work in Murihiku Southland

*A survey of workers' experience*



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# Introduction

It is an aspiration that all employees of Aotearoa have decent work, live in thriving communities, and contribute to a flourishing sustainable economy. This is key to a Just Transition, where industry transformation leaves no worker behind as climate change, the technology revolution, and new green industry challenges us all to change.

The Decent Work Survey captures a representative voice of workers in Murihiku Southland, providing insight into the lives of employees across the region. It was launched in April 2023 as a collaborative effort between stakeholders of the Just Transition project in Murihiku Southland.

Survey questions and findings have been organised by four decent work pillars, the ngā pou whā of decent income, secure work, quality work environment, and workers' voice. These pou reflect an internationally recognised framework for decent work, which has been tested with the workforce here in Aotearoa, through research recognised by Massey University. This report is prepared by E tū, the representative union voice in the Just Transition project, supported by the Just Transition Unit of MBIE.

The results of the survey provide an opportunity for those responsible for planning for the future of the region to better understand the experiences, needs and preferences of workers, as part of a wider strategy to grow an economy that attracts and retains workers in Murihiku Southland.



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# Executive summary of results

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This majority of workers surveyed (61%) say that they get paid only just enough, or not enough to fund necessities, while 33% say they get paid more than enough to provide for the necessities of life.



Of those surveyed, 67% of workers in the region feel secure in their job, although the majority (77%) also say that if they lost their main job, they would experience immediate financial hardship.



More than a third (37%) surveyed, say their job would not be easily replaced with similar or better pay and conditions if they lost their job, while 28% think their pay and conditions would be sustained, and 35% are unsure.



Only one quarter of workers say they have access to redundancy payment, the largest proportion don't know what their redundancy provisions are, and 25% say they have no job loss support.



Over 40% of the workers said their job did not offer prospects for career advancement, compared to 30% of workers who said they did.



61% of the workers felt safe from risk of injury at work, but 60% said they felt exhausted after work about half to most days, and 39% of workers said their jobs were too demanding and stressful.



Most workers surveyed said they did not experience discrimination/intimidating behaviours, and 70% felt supported by their colleagues.



# Executive summary of results

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26% of surveyed workers who recently left their job, representing the largest proportion, did so due to psychological or social pressures at work.



74% of workers in Murihiku Southland feel that they are doing useful and meaningful work.



36% of workers don't think that their workplace cultures are healthy and positive.



46% of surveyed workers say that they can influence decisions that are important for their work, while 26% say that they don't have this ability.



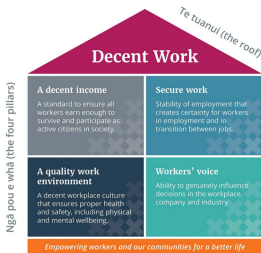
45% of the workers said their employers consulted with them and gave them an opportunity to express and consider their views, while 42% said there was no consultation or it was not satisfactory.

# Background

The Decent Work Survey was launched in April 2023. It is an extensive and collaborative effort between local government, unions, iwi, and businesses in Murihiku Southland to give all workers across the region a confidential voice and was the first time a region-wide employee survey has been conducted in Murihiku Southland.

All employees across the region were urged to participate to help support decent work and decent workplaces by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses in the workplaces of Murihiku Southland.

Survey questions were organised by the E tū Decent Work framework, the ngā pou whā (four pillars): decent income, secure work, quality work environment, and workers' voice (See illustration below.)



Te whenua (the land, roots)

The framework was created in 2021 and is embedded in well researched and accepted job quality principles from The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 'Job Quality' framework<sup>1</sup>, as well as the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) 'Decent Work' framework<sup>2</sup>.

1. Cazes, S., Hijzen, A., & Saint-Martin, A. (2015). Measuring and assessing job quality: the OECD Job Quality Framework [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/measuring-and-assessing-job-quality\\_5jrp02k9w1mr-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/measuring-and-assessing-job-quality_5jrp02k9w1mr-en)  
2. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/-/integration/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_115402.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/-/integration/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_115402.pdf)

# Methodology

## The survey questions

The survey presented questions or statements that were largely Likert scale (for example, the choices would range from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', and from 'nearly every day' to 'never'). The survey followed formatting from existing 'working life' surveys, such as the Work Orientations survey from the International Social Survey Programme<sup>3</sup> and closely reflected each principle under the decent work framework.

This table shows which decent work principle each of the survey questions relates to.

### A decent income

- 10. What is your hourly rate?
- 11. If you are paid an annual salary, what is it?
- 12. Are you paid enough to provide for your household to have the necessities of life?
- 13. Do you receive ongoing financial support from the government for your household to have the necessities of life?(e.g. Working for Families, Sole Parent Support, Accommodation Supplement)
- 14. Considering your skills, responsibilities, and achievements in your job, you feel you get paid fairly.

### Secure work

- 15. I have a secure job.
- 16. Losing my main job would result in immediate financial hardship for me and my family (I would be unable to pay my rent or mortgage, and buy food or other necessities).
- 17. How difficult or easy would it be for you to get a similar or better job, conditions, and/or pay with another employer in the region if you had to leave your current job?
- 18. What type of job are you currently in, and what type of job would you prefer?
- 19. My job regularly gives me a chance to improve my skills.
- 20. My job offers good prospects for career advancement (within the organisation or outside of it).
- 21. If there was a restructure at your workplace, which of the following options does your employer currently offer to support you through a transition?

3. [https://auckland.figshare.com/articles/dataset/ISSP2015\\_Work\\_Orientations\\_IV/3486728](https://auckland.figshare.com/articles/dataset/ISSP2015_Work_Orientations_IV/3486728)

## A quality work environment

22. I feel safe from risk of injury at work
23. How often do you feel physically exhausted after work?
24. Have you experienced discrimination at your main job in the last 12 months?
25. Have you experienced intimidation or harassment in your main job in the last 12 months? (e.g., bullying, verbal, physical or emotional abuse, sexual harassment).
26. My colleagues help and support me.
27. My managers help and support me.
28. I generally have enough time to carry out my work properly within my paid working hours.
29. My work is too demanding and stressful.
30. I can decide how my daily work is organised.
31. I can choose/change the pace of my work.
32. My manager(s) treat(s) me with dignity and respect.
33. My workplace culture is healthy and positive.
34. It is made clear what is expected of me at work.
35. I have a performance evaluation at least once a year which is based on specific and measurable criteria (such as met objectives and personal development).
36. My workplace is inclusive, and recognises and celebrates diversity.
37. How often do you work unsociable hours? (evenings and nights, weekends, or on public holidays).
38. How often are you required to work overtime at short notice (paid or unpaid)?
39. I can take a break when I need it.
40. I can balance my personal and family needs in this job.
41. My job offers flexible working hours if I prefer them.
42. The leaders in my organisation motivate me to give my best job performance.
43. I feel that I am doing useful and meaningful work.



### **Workers' voice**

44. I can influence decisions that are important for my work.

45. Over the past 12 months, has your employer consulted with you about changes that affect your work and/or working conditions?

46. At your workplace, does management hold meetings in which you can express your views about what is happening in the organisation?

47. Is there at least one elected Health and Safety Representative in your workplace?

48. Over the last 12 months have you discussed work-related problems with a union representative? (organiser or a delegate).

49. Over the past 12 months, have you been consulted on health and safety issues at work by your employer or a health and safety representative?

Several other questions were included in the survey, in consultation with the stakeholders, to capture aspects of work specific to the context of work in Murihiku Southland, including:

- Do you do any voluntary or unpaid work? (For example, any volunteering in the community, caring for children at home, caring unpaid for another person, etc.)
- Have you moved to new employment (with a different company) in the last 12 months, or intend to make this change soon? (If yes, what is the main reason for the change?)
- Do you have any barriers that make it difficult for you to work or do training?

### **Reliability**

The survey results reliably reflect experiences of workers in Murihiku Southland.

There were 590 individual workers who completed the Decent Work Survey. In 2022 there were close to 51,000 employees working in Murihiku Southland. Statistically, 590 responses give us confidence that the survey results are reliable in reflecting what workers in Murihiku Southland think and feel about their working conditions (with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 0.04). The approach is consistent with how Statistics New Zealand samples the population and meets the recommended Statistics New Zealand guidelines.<sup>4</sup>

4. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Methods/A-guide-to-good-survey-design-fifth-edition/a-guide-to-good-survey-design-fifth-edition.pdf>

The data fairly represented the Murihiku Southland workforce when assessing the participants by various demographic and other factors. Part 3 of this report describes the distribution of these characteristics compared with the general population of Murihiku Southland. That chapter also highlights any statistically significant and unexpected differences in responses to the survey question between these groups.

### Data collection and analysis

The data was collected using Survey Monkey. The survey was anonymous and did not collect data on or identify individual workers and employers. 590 individual responses were collected and analysed following the closing date of the survey.

Descriptive statistics explain the overall responses to each question from all workers who participated in the survey. Significant relationships between demographic and other personal variables and responses to questions were tested using statistical method to highlight significant variability between groups.

Highly significant results were highlighted in this report. Where there are no associations indicated, it means they were either weak or insignificant and all data was assessed for correlations.



5. The report used way ANOVA variance of means with a Tukey Post Hoc test for ordinal and scale variables, and Pearson's chi-square significance levels for categorical variables.

6. Where Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was larger than 0.5 the associations were evaluated and highlighted as indications of significant and unexpected relationships.

# Results

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A summary of the key survey findings are illustrated in a chart below, reflecting the ngā pou whā.

## A decent income

- More than half of Murihiku Southland workers' pay is either just meeting their household's life necessities, or not meeting them.
- Half of the workforce don't think they get paid fairly for their contributions at work.

## Secure work

- Most workers in Murihiku Southland feel that they have secure jobs.
- Most workers in Murihiku Southland are vulnerable to the financial impacts of job loss and say they would be experiencing immediate financial hardship if they lost their job.

## A quality work environment

- Most workers feel they are doing useful and meaningful work.
- Most workers feel safe from risk of injury at work, but report high levels of stress and exhaustion after work.
- Workplace culture is reported to be healthy and positive in almost half of workplaces, and reported as unhealthy and not positive in a third of all workplaces.
- Workplace culture appears to depend on a few factors in Murihiku Southland, but most strongly on how managers treat and support workers, and how managers show leadership to motivate workers to do their best on the job.

## Workers' voice

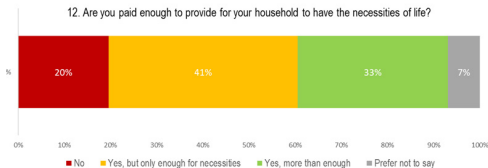
- Half of the workers say they have a voice at work, and a quarter say that they don't.
- Half of the workers say their employers consult with them and give them an opportunity to express and consider their views, and the other half say that there is no consultation or that it isn't satisfactory.

## A decent income

A decent income means ensuring all workers earn enough to survive and participate as active citizens in society, for example, by earning at least the Living Wage, and having pay rates that are reflective of skills and responsibilities at work.

### Survey findings summary

A third of workers surveyed say that their pay covers more than enough for their household to have life's necessities, however, the remaining two thirds say that they don't get paid enough, or they say that they get paid just enough to meet these essentials (Question 12).



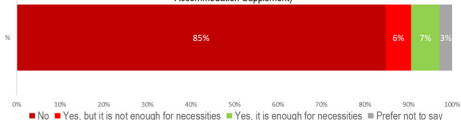
Most of the workers report that they are not earning any more than is necessary for their households to meet basic living necessities of life. This means that these workers are less likely to have disposable income to participate in community life and leisure, such as seeing a movie, or a holiday with their family, impacting the local economy.

Workers surveyed seek fairer recognition in pay for their contributions at work with a third saying they get paid fairly for the skills, responsibilities, and achievements but half disagreeing with this statement and close to a fifth strongly disagreeing. When compared by occupation, machinery operators, drivers, labourers, and community or personal service workers report the highest dissatisfaction with their pay.

13% of workers were receiving some form of financial assistance from the government. Half of those said that it was not enough for necessities (Question 13).

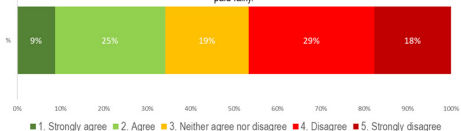


13. Do you receive ongoing financial support from the government for your household to have the necessities of life?(e.g. Working for Families, Sole Parent Support, Accommodation Supplement)



A decent income means that pay fairly reflects skills and responsibilities. Half of the workers don't feel that their pay fairly reflects their skills, responsibilities, and achievements (Question 14), while 34% think they do, 19% are not sure, and 47% of the workers disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

14. Considering your skills, responsibilities, and achievements in your job, you feel you get paid fairly.



## Secure work

Secure work means having stability of employment that creates certainty for workers in employment and in transition between jobs. Secure work can be supported through the following provisions at work:

- Contractual provisions for stable work
- Processes for restructuring and redundancy that mean workers are no worse off
- Options for learning, upskilling, and career progression
- Guaranteed work hours

## Survey findings summary

A large proportion of those surveyed feel that they have job security (67%), which is positive for wellbeing of the worker and their whanau. However, most workers (77%) surveyed said that if they did lose their main job, there would be immediate financial hardship for them and their families, with over a half of workers strongly agreeing that they would not be able to pay their rent or mortgage, buy food or other necessities. This is consistent with most workers saying that they only get paid enough to cover life's necessities in the 'Decent Income' section of the report. This is a risk to be noted given the potential impact on the economy of large company closures and associated job losses.

When asked, a third of the workers think that if they lost their job, the job could easily be replaced with another with similar conditions and pay, a third are not sure, and just over another third think that it would be difficult to find work with similar pay and conditions.

Most full time and part time workers surveyed are happy with their working arrangements, while contract and casual workers are more likely to prefer to be employed in permanent work instead.

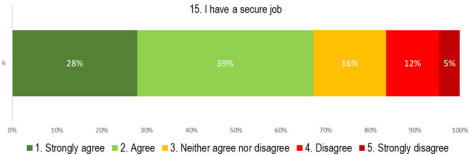
Skills improvement and career progression are also important aspects of job security, they offer advancement and enable workers to keep up as their employers' businesses and industries evolve, they also offer job security through workers gaining transferable skills and experience that can be applied to other jobs and industries in case the worker needs to change jobs.

Half of the workers surveyed say that their jobs give them a chance to regularly improve their skills, and about a third of workers say that their job does not regularly offer a chance to improve their skills. In terms of career advancement opportunities, a third of workers say that they have this opportunity in their job, a third do not agree or disagree, and another third disagree or strongly disagree that their job offers good prospects for career advancement.

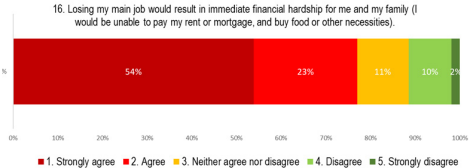
Restructuring provisions offer workers a sense of security in case of redundancies, they ease the financial burden of job losses for the worker and the local economy.

40% of workers say that they are not sure what their restructuring provisions are. Of the rest, a quarter of the workers, say that they have provisions for redundancy payments in their agreements. Close to 20% of workers also have support for redeployment. Fewer than 10% of workers have provisions for upskilling and training to support transition to other work or help with CV and interview preparation, and 16% have a consultative process in place for a restructure. A quarter of all workers are estimated to not have access to any restructure and redundancy provisions.

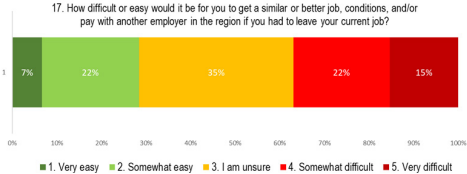
The majority of the workers agree that they have a secure job (67%), 16% disagree or strongly disagree that their job is secure, and 16% neither agree nor disagree (Question 15).



77% of workers say that losing their main job would result in immediate financial hardship for them and their whanau in the form of their ability to pay their rent or mortgage, or pay for food or other necessities. This indicates that workers have little financial security in the event that they transition from their current jobs to other work. 12% of workers disagree or strongly disagree with this statement, and 11% don't agree nor disagree (Question 16).



Under a third of workers think their job would be easily replaceable if they lost it (28%), while close to 40% say that it would be somewhat difficult or very difficult to replace their jobs (37%), and just over a third are unsure about how difficult it would be to find another job (35%) (Question 17).

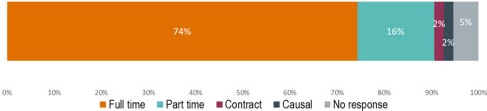


**a. Preferred work type**

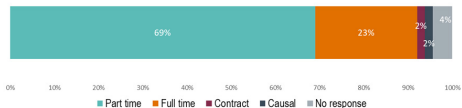
Question 18 asked the survey participants about their current and preferred job type. When looking at whether workers are employed in the type of work arrangement they prefer, we see that full time and part time workers are most likely to say that they prefer the job type they are currently in (74% and 69% respectively).

Contract workers and casual workers are reporting that they prefer their job type much less frequently, with only a third saying that contract or casual work is their preferred job type. Over a half of contract workers say that they prefer to be in full time work and two thirds of casual workers say that they also prefer to be in full time or part time work.

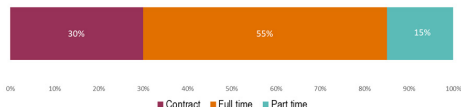
Full time workers' preferred work type



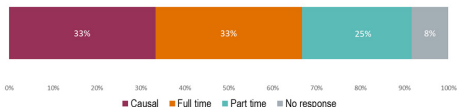
**Part time workers' preferred work type**



**Contract workers' preferred work type**



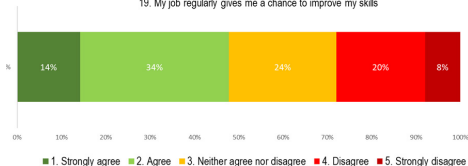
**Casual workers' preferred work type**



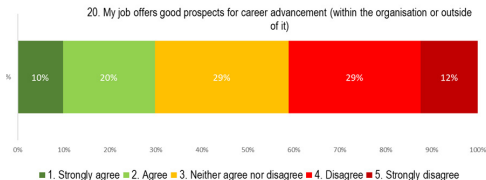
## **b. Skill improvement and career advancement opportunities at work**

Half of the workers surveyed say that their jobs gave them an opportunity to improve their skills, a quarter don't agree or disagree, and less than a third (28%) say that their jobs don't give them this chance (Question 19).

**19. My job regularly gives me a chance to improve my skills**



When asking about whether workers have good opportunities for career advancement through their job, 30% agree, 29% don't agree nor disagree, and 41% of workers say that their job doesn't offer them good prospects for career advancement (Question 20).

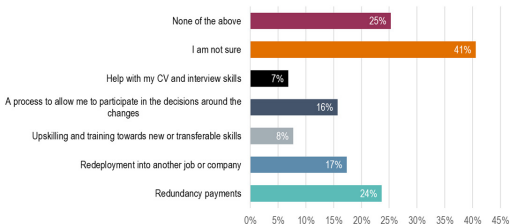


Workers that agreed with the question about skill improvement opportunities in their jobs were also likely to agree with the question about career advancement, and vice versa, where there was disagreement with Question 19, this was likely to correlate with disagreement with Question 20 (pairwise  $r = 0.672$ ).

### c. Redundancy and restructure provisions

A large proportion of workers surveyed don't know what provisions are offered to them by their employer when there is a restructure in their workplace (41%). A quarter say that redundancy payments are available to them, 17% say there is an option for them to redeploy to another company or employer, 16% say that there is a consultation process available, 8% say there is help for them to be able to upskill and train, and 7% say that they are offered help with their CV. A quarter of workers also say that no provisions are available to them if there was a restructure to occur in their workplace.

21a. If there was a restructure at your workplace, which of the following options does your employer currently offer to support you through a transition?



## Workplace environment

A quality work environment has a decent workplace culture that ensures proper health and safety, including physical and mental well-being.

The working environment includes the following aspects at work:

Physical and psychological health and safety

- Support from colleagues and managers
- Work pressures
- Work control and flexibility
- Workplace culture
- Managerial practices and task clarity
- Rewarding and meaningful work

(Questions 23 – 36)

## Survey findings summary

Most workers feel safe from risk of injury at work (61%). This is positive feedback for workplaces in Murihiku Southland; however, a fifth of all workers surveyed say that they are not free from risk of injury. Labourers and community or personal service workers are reporting the highest risk of injury at work compared with other occupations.

Clerical and administrative workers report the lowest risk of injury.

It is important to note that over a third of the workforce are physically exhausted after work on most days. Another quarter of the workers experience physical exhaustion after work half of the time. And less than a fifth of the workers say that they never experience it, or only experience it a few times a year. This is consistent with workers reporting high loads of demand and stress in their jobs, with 40% of workers saying that their work is too demanding and stressful, compared with 25% of workers that say their work isn't demanding or stressful.

It is a positive finding that a substantial part of the surveyed workforce has never experienced discrimination, intimidation, or harassment or report that this happens only on a few days in a year. With major negative impacts on wellbeing and health, it is notable that around 15% of the workers surveyed experience these behaviours on most to half of all days at work.

When asked questions about workplace pressures, most workers say that they generally have enough time to carry out their work properly within their paid hours, although around a third of the workforce disagree with the statement. Close to 40% of the workforce do their jobs during unsociable hours either most or half of the days on the job (such as weekends, evenings or public holidays) and the same proportion of workers also say that they almost never work unsociable hours.

In terms of flexibility and control over work, most of the workers can decide how their work is organised and take a break when they need it. The majority also say that they can balance work with personal and family needs. When asked about flexible hours, close to half of workers say that their job doesn't offer flexible hours.

Workplace culture is considered healthy and positive in about half of the workplaces in our survey. However, close to 40% of workplaces are reported as not healthy or positive. Workplace culture shows some of the strongest connections to other aspects of a person's job - management practices, behaviours, and leadership. When workers were treated with dignity and respect, when they had help and support, and were motivated to do a good job, those same workers described their workplace culture as healthy and positive. Other aspects of work that are directly linked to workplace culture include:

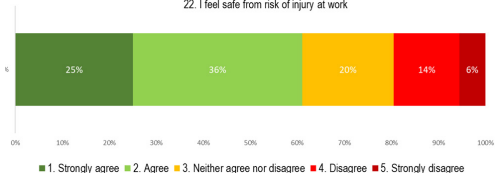


- being able to participate in decision making at work
- having help from colleagues
- having skill development opportunities
- having a workplace that recognises and celebrates diversity

### a. Physical and psychological health and safety at work

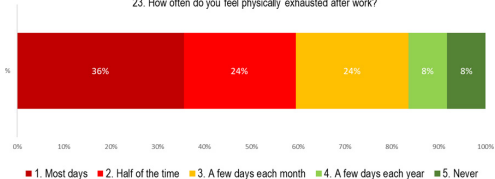
More than half of the workers (61%) feel safe from risk of injury at work. 20% neither agree nor disagree they feel safe, and a fifth of all workers don't feel safe from risk of injury at work (20%). (Question 22).

22. I feel safe from risk of injury at work

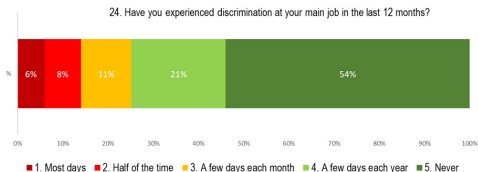


61% of workers feel physically exhausted most days or half of the time after work. With 36% (over a third of all workers) feeling physically exhausted most days after work. A quarter of workers (24%) feel physically exhausted after work a few days each month, 8% a few days each year and 8% never feel physically exhausted after work (Question 23).

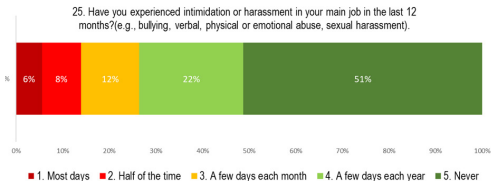
23. How often do you feel physically exhausted after work?



Over half of all workers surveyed never feel discrimination, intimidation or harassment in their jobs, when asked about the preceding last 12 months. 6% of workers experience this behaviour most days, 8% experience it half of the time, and 12% a few days each month (Question 24).



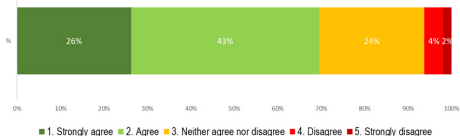
Workers that agreed with the question about discrimination in their jobs in the last 12 months were also likely to agree with the statement about whether they experienced intimidation or harassment in their jobs over the same period, and vice versa, where workers disagreed with Question 24, they also disagreed with Question 25 (pairwise  $r = 0.673$ ).



## **b. Support from colleagues and managers**

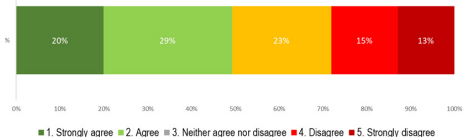
The majority of workers feel supported by their colleagues (70%), a quarter neither agree nor disagree that their colleagues help and support them, and 6% disagree that they get help and support (Question 26).

26. My colleagues help and support me



Half of workers agree or strongly agree that their managers help and support them, a quarter neither agree nor disagree, and close to 30% of workers say that their managers don't help and support them (Question 27).

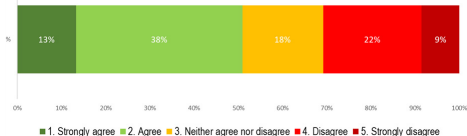
27. My managers help and support me



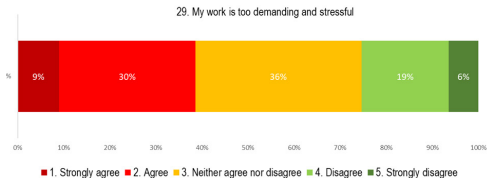
### c. Work pressures

Half of the workers say that they have enough time to carry out their work properly within their paid hours. Just over a third of workers disagree or strongly disagree that they have enough time to complete their work in their paid hours (31%) (Question 28).

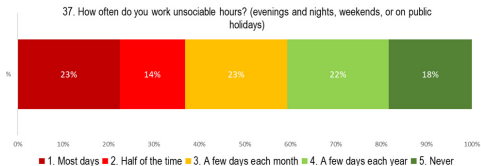
28. I generally have enough time to carry out my work properly within my paid working hours



40% of workers agree or strongly agree that their work is too demanding or stressful. A quarter of the workers (25%) don't agree that their work is too demanding or stressful, and 36% neither agree nor disagree (Question 29).

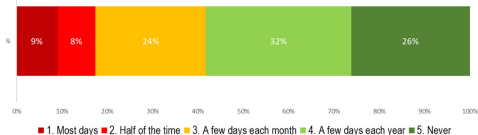


Over a third of workers (37%) work unsocial hours most days or half of the time with close to a quarter saying that they work unsociable hours on most days. About a quarter (23%) say that they do this a few days each month and 41% say that they only do it a few days each year or never (Question 37).



Over half of workers are not required to work overtime at short notice often, and only do so a few days a year, or never. A quarter of workers surveyed work overtime at short notice a few days each month, and close to a fifth of the workforce do so most days or half of the time (17%) (Question 38).

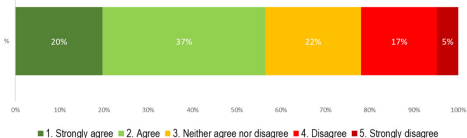
38. How often are you required to work overtime at short notice (paid or unpaid)?



#### d. Work control and flexibility

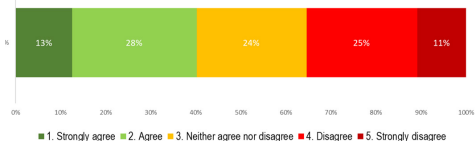
Close to 60% of workers can decide how their work is organised, compared with 22% who do not feel they can control this aspect of their work (Question 30).

30. I can decide how my daily work is organised

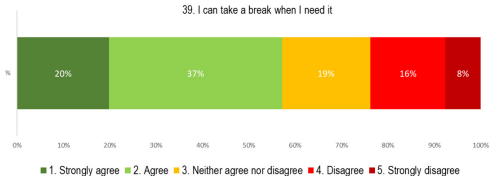


40% of workers can choose and change their work pace, while 35% cannot (Question 31).

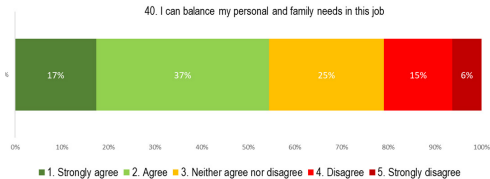
31. I can choose/change the pace of my work



Over a half of workers (57%) can take a break when they need it, and a quarter of the workforce cannot (Question 39).

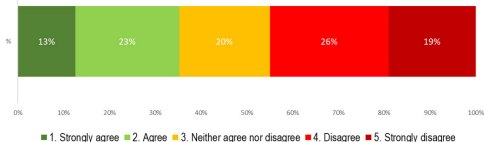


54% of workers surveyed are happy with their work-life balance, saying that they can balance their family and personal needs. A quarter of the workers (25%) neither agree nor disagree, and a fifth (21%) do not agree that they can balance personal and family needs in their jobs (Question 40).



35% of workers say they have flexible working hours if they prefer them, and 45% of the workers say that they do not (Question 41).

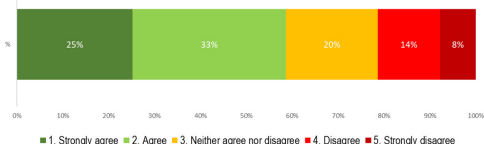
#### 41. My job offers flexible working hours if I prefer them



#### e. Workplace culture

Over half of all workers feel that their manager or managers treat them with dignity and respect. 20% neither agree nor disagree and a fifth (21%) disagree or strongly disagree (Question 32).

#### 32. My manager(s) treat(s) me with dignity and respect



Question 32 had a particularly strong relationship with other questions in the survey meaning that workers' responses to this question also had a consistent response to other questions, indicating that management play an important role in predicting other aspects of work.

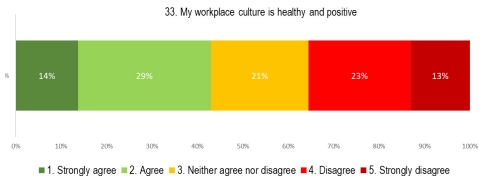
The more in agreement workers are about their managers treating them with dignity and respect, the more in agreement they also are about their managers supporting them, their workplace culture being positive, their leaders motivating them to give their best job performance, their workplace being inclusive and celebrating diversity, and being able to influence decisions in their work. These correlations can be seen in table 1 below.

**Table 1 Correlation table for Question 32**

Workers' responses to the statement "my manager(s) treat(s) me with dignity and respect" had a positive relationship with their responses to the following statements:	Pearson Correlation ** sig at $\alpha = 0.000$	Correlation strength
27. My managers help and support me	.803**	Strong
33. My workplace culture is healthy and positive	.718**	Strong
34. It is made clear what is expected of me at work	.534**	Moderate
36. My workplace is inclusive, and recognises and celebrates diversity	.566**	Moderate
42. The leaders in my organisation motivate me to give my best job performance	.683**	Moderate
44. I can influence decisions that are important for my work	.567**	Moderate

This indicates that there is an important link between all of these factors and management practices for workers.

43% of all workers agree that their workplace culture is healthy and positive, while 36% of workers don't agree with the statement, and 21% neither agree nor disagree (Question 33).



Question 33 also has a strong relationship with other statements in the survey, indicating a that there is a link between workplace culture being healthy and positive and other aspects of work.



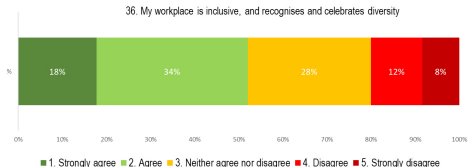
Managers are important for predicting whether a workplace culture is healthy and positive. The strongest relationship was between workplace culture perceptions and perceptions about managers, including whether managers treat them with dignity and respect, whether the leaders in their organisation motivate them to give their best job performance, and whether managers help and support them.

A moderate relationship is also seen between perceptions about the health of work culture and whether workers have the chance to improve their skills, whether the workers experience discrimination at work, help and support from colleagues, inclusivity in their workplace, and the ability to influence decisions important for their work, and be consulted about their views. These correlations can be viewed in table 2 below.

*Table 2 Correlation table for Question 33*

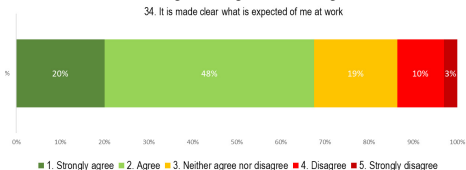
Workers' responses to the statement "my manager(s) treat(s) me with dignity and respect" had a positive relationship with their responses to the following statements:	Pearson Correlation ** sig at $\alpha = 0.000$	Correlation strength
19. My job regularly gives me a chance to improve my skills	.505**	Moderate
24. Have you experienced discrimination at your main job in the last 12 months?	.492**	Moderate
26. My colleagues help and support me	.504**	Moderate
27. My managers help and support me	.699**	Strong
32. My manager(s) treat(s) me with dignity and respect	.718**	Strong
36. My workplace is inclusive, and recognises and celebrates diversity	.597**	Moderate
42. The leaders in my organisation motivate me to give my best job performance	.713**	Strong
44. I can influence decisions that are important for my work	.595**	Moderate
46. At your workplace, does management hold meetings in which you can express your views about what is happening in the organisation?	.461**	Moderate

Half the workers say that their workplace is inclusive and recognises and celebrates diversity (52%). However, 20% of workers say that their workplace is not inclusive, recognising and celebrating diversity (Question 36).

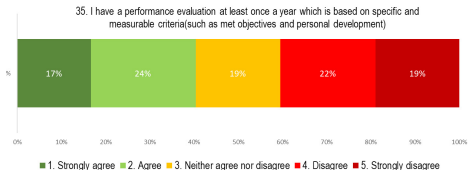


#### **f. Managerial practices and task clarity**

The majority of workers surveyed say that it is made clear to them what is expected of them at work (68%), 19% don't agree or disagree and 13% disagree (Question 34).



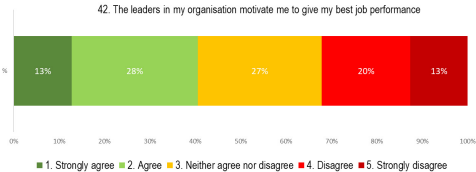
40% of workers get a performance evaluation and 40% of workers don't. 20% didn't respond one way or another (Question 35).



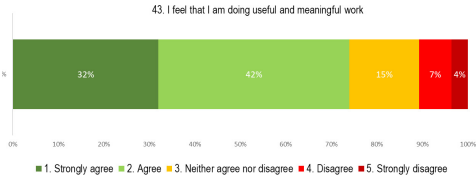
Workers surveyed in the region outside of Invercargill and Gore are significantly less likely to have a performance evaluation.

**g. Rewarding and meaningful work**

40% of workers say that their leaders motivate and support them, a third neither agree nor disagree, and another third don't agree that their leaders do (Question 42).



The majority of workers in our survey (74%) feel that they are doing useful and meaningful work, which indicates that most workers feel connected to their jobs and care about what they do, and feel they bring value through their jobs. Only 11% of workers did not agree that they were doing useful and meaningful work (Question 43).



## Voice at work

Having a voice at work means having the ability to genuinely influence decisions in the workplace, company, and industry.

Workers' voice is built through the following attributes at work:

- Ability to influence decisions
- Consultation with employers
- Collective representation through a trade union
- Elected Health and Safety Representatives

### Survey results summary

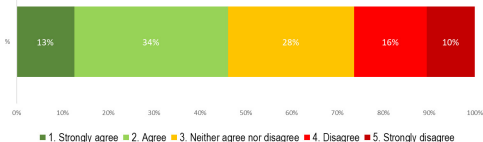
Having a voice at work associates positively with a healthy workplace culture and motivating leadership style. Almost half of the workforce surveyed say that they have the ability to influence decisions that are important for their work, while a quarter of workers say that they don't have this ability.

Half of the workers also said that they were consulted by management when changes were recently proposed at work and that managers regularly hold meetings where they had a chance to express their views about what is happening at work. Around 40% to half of workers responded that they don't have a satisfactory voice at work when asked the same questions, and a third of workers say that there isn't ever an opportunity for them to have a meeting with management at which they can express their view about what's happening at work.

It is positive to see that 75% of workers say their workplaces have a Health and Safety representative.

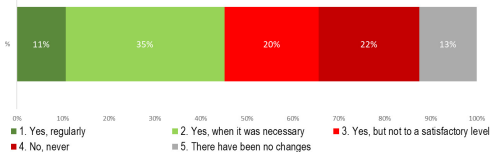
Almost half of all workers say that they can influence decisions that are important for their work (46%), about a third of workers don't agree or disagree that they can influence decisions, and a quarter (26%) of workers disagree with the statement (Question 44).

#### 44. I can influence decisions that are important for my work



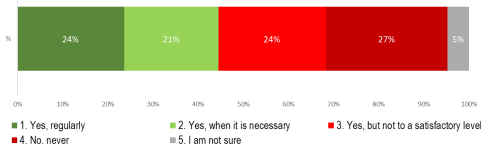
Around a half of workers also say that they have had a chance to consult with their employer in the last 12 months. An additional 20% say that they were consulted by their employer but not to a satisfactory level. 22% have had no consultation, and 13% say that there were no changes to consult about (Question 45).

#### 45. Over the past 12 months, has your employer consulted with you about changes that affect your work and/or working conditions?



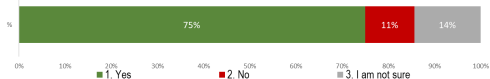
Similar responses were provided to the question about whether there are meetings held by management where the worker can express their views. 45% said yes; another 25% said yes but that these were not satisfactory. A third (27%) said that they never had such meetings and 5% were not sure (Question 46).

46. At your workplace, does management hold meetings in which you can express your views about what is happening in the organisation?



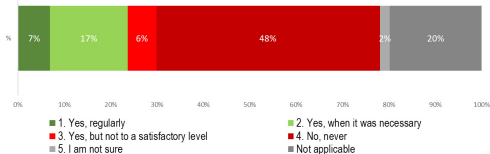
It was positive that most workplaces had at least one Health and Safety representative elected, although 11% don't have a representative elected and 14% don't know (Question 47).

47. Is there at least one elected Health and Safety Representative in your workplace?



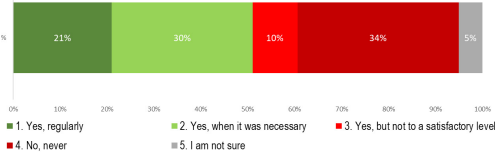
50% of workers have not discussed a workplace-related problem with a union representative, 30% did discuss a work-related problem with the union, and of those, 6% were not satisfied. 20% of workers said this was not applicable to them (Question 48).

48. Over the last 12 months have you discussed work-related problems with a union representative?(organiser or a delegate)



60% of workers were consulted about health and safety issues at work by their employer or a health and safety representative in the 12 months prior, and of those, around 15% said this consultation was not done to a satisfactory level. 35% did not have any health and safety-related consultation, and 5% were not sure (Question 49).

49. Over the past 12 months, have you been consulted on health and safety issues at work by your employer or a health and safety representative?

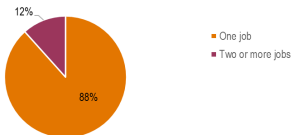


# Murihiku Southland specific questions

A number of additional questions were added to the standard Decent Work survey to specifically understand the Murihiku Southland workforce better. Questions four and five asked about the number of jobs each worker had and the number of hours they worked in these jobs each week.

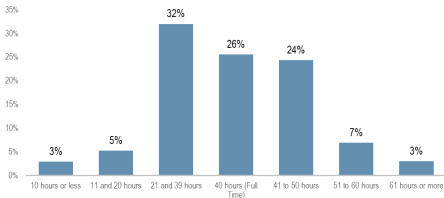
Most workers in Murihiku Southland have one job (88%), and 12% have two or more jobs they regularly work (Question 4).

## 4. How many paid jobs do you currently work?



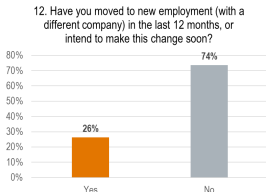
Over a third of all workers (35%) say they work over full time (40 hours) each week, a quarter work 40 hours, and another third work between 21 and 39 hours each week (Question 5).

## 5. Total hours worked for all paid jobs per week





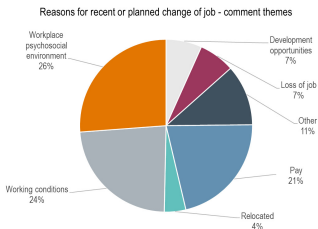
Workers were asked whether they had recently moved to new employment or intended to do so in the near future. A quarter (26%) answered 'Yes' (Question 12).



We also asked workers to write their feedback to explain the reason for this change. 149 responses were categorised into themes. Of the written comments, a quarter of all workers said that their recent or planned change was related to workplace psychosocial hazards<sup>7</sup> (relating to the social and mental wellbeing risks at work). The comments of workers under this theme were largely in reference to bad workplace culture or environment, and lack of satisfaction with management or the employer.

Just under a quarter of the workers who commented said that their job change was related to working conditions, most frequently citing working hours, and work-life balance.

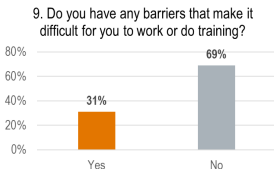
A quarter of the works said the change was related to pay.



7. <https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/research/psychosocial-hazards-in-work-environments-and-effective-approaches-for-managing-them/>

Comments relating to psychosocial reasons specifically referred to working culture and environment, and management and employers, as the most frequent explanations. 7% of the workers changed jobs because they had lost their previous job, and 4% said that they had relocated. Other comments included starting own business, retirement, location, or cost of transport (11%).

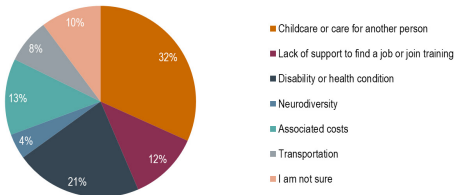
30% of workers have barriers that make it difficult for them to work or do training (Question 9).



The pie chart below breaks down the barriers cited by the workers.

A third of respondents say that childcare or care for another person is the reason, 20% have a disability or a health condition, 12% say that they lack support to find a job or training, 13% say that the associated costs of work and training are a barrier, 10% are not sure, 8% say that transportation is a barrier, and 4% say that neurodiversity is a barrier for them.

9. Do you have any barriers that make it difficult for you to work or do training? (Yes, N:186)



# Characteristics of the Murihiku Southland respondents

The workers who participated in the survey were asked about their age group, ethnicity, place of residence and work, their occupations, and industries that they work in, the size of the business they work for, how much they get paid, and how long they have been employed at their jobs, among other questions. These questions helped us see whether enough people responded to the survey from various groups in the community to be fairly representative.

The working people of Murihiku Southland that responded to the survey show good representation across these groups (See graphs below). The darker blue bars represent the proportion of the survey participants within each group represented, while the grey bars represent the entire working population of Murihiku Southland. You can compare the breakdown of our survey participants with the breakdown of the working population of Murihiku Southland.

## a. Age group

For age groups, the survey had a good spread of respondents, slightly over-representing older workers and under-representing younger workers in Murihiku Southland (Figure 2).

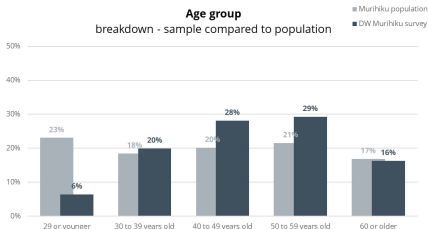


Figure 2 data - Statistics NZ 2018  
 $\chi^2$ -squared = 91.216,  $df = 4$ ,  $p$ -value < 2.2e-16

## b. Ethnicity

The survey accurately represents ethnic group breakdowns in the workforce of Murihiku Southland providing a good reflection on workplace experiences across ethnic groups (Figure 3).

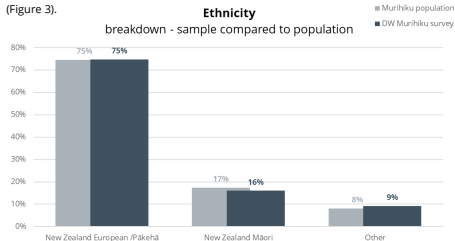


Figure 3 data - Statistics NZ 2023  
 $\chi^2 = 1.4399$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.4868$

Variability in responses by ethnicity: When evaluating workers' responses to all the questions in the survey by ethnic group, there appears to be no significantly different responses between the groups to the questions suggesting that ethnicity doesn't play a role in the experiences reported by workers through this survey (at  $\alpha < 0.05$  sig. level)

## c. Employer business size

Workers of different sized businesses are also fairly represented in the results (Figure 4).

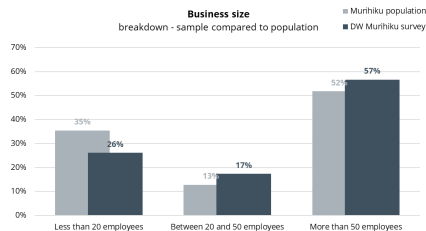
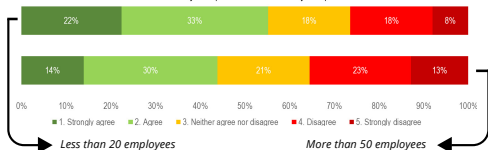


Figure 4 data - Statistics NZ 2022  
 $\chi^2 = 24.508$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 4.767e-06$

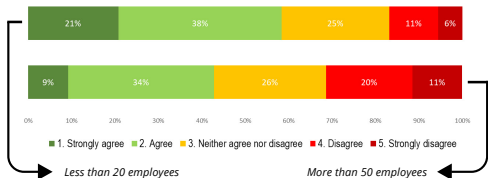
When comparing responses to questions by business size, there were few significant differences. Employees in workplaces with more than 50 employees are more likely to disagree that their workplace culture is healthy and positive, compared to businesses with less than 20 employees.

33. My workplace culture is healthy and positive



Workers in workplaces with less than 20 employees also say that they are significantly more likely to be able to influence decisions that are important for their work compared with workplaces with more than 50 employees.

44. I can influence decisions that are important for my work



#### d. Location of job

More survey participants were employed in Invercargill than other parts of the region (81%) than we would expect to see in the general working population of Murihiku Southland (56%). However, the survey results still represent workers across the region, with 8% of respondents indicating that they were employed in Gore, Mataura or Waikaka and 11% in other parts of Murihiku Southland (Figure 5).

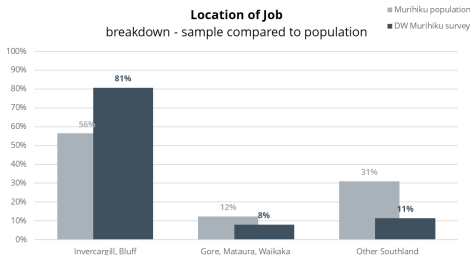


Figure 5 Data - Statistics NZ 2022

There were no significant differences in responses to the survey questions between the locations of work, with the exception of one question about performance evaluations (Q35), this is highlighted later in the text.

Variability in responses by location of job: Workers in the region outside of Invercargill, are significantly less likely to have a performance evaluation (at  $\alpha < 0.05$  sig. level). There were no other significant differences in responses related to the location of a job.

#### e. Industry

There was a good spread of survey respondents across the various industries represented in the Murihiku Southland region. The under/over representation of workers of certain industries was not significant enough to suggest one industry group is overly influencing the results of the survey (Figure 6).

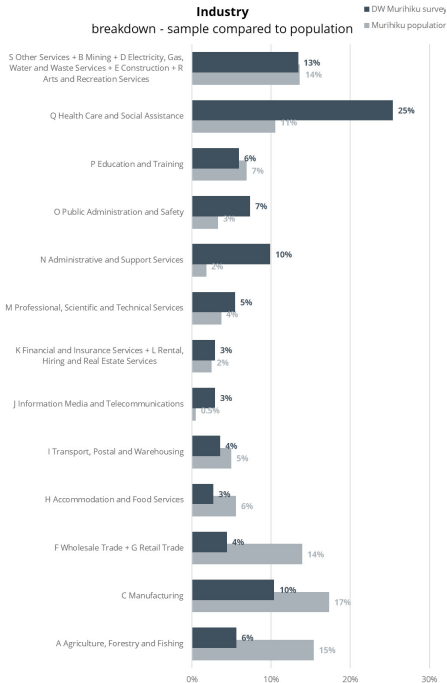


Figure 6 data - Statistics NZ 2022  
X-squared = 544.53, df = 12, p-value < 2.2e-16

This was similar when looking at the breakdown of our survey participants by occupation (Figure 7).

#### f. Occupation

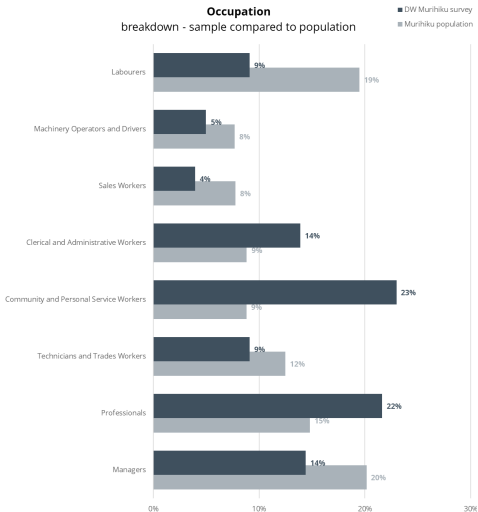


Figure 7 data - Statistics NZ 2018

$\chi^2 = 231.88$ ,  $df = 7$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 2.2e-16$

Variability in results was not tested by occupation because the responses were spread too finely by industry group.



There were a number of significant differences in response rates when breaking down the survey responses by occupation type. Income security was lowest for labourers and highest for managers (Q12).

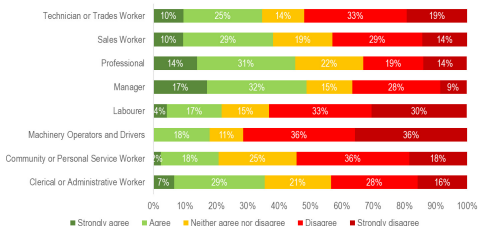
**12. Are you paid enough to provide for your household to have the necessities of life?**



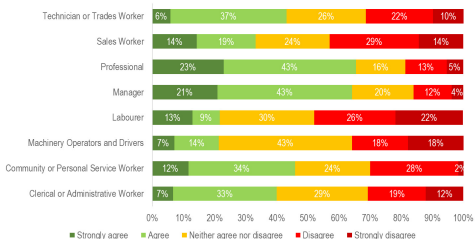
Figure 7 Pearson Chi-Square <.001

Fair recognition with pay was lowest among machinery operators and drivers (72% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their pay fairly reflects their skills and responsibilities on the job), followed by labourers (63% disagreed), and community and service workers (54% disagreed) (Q14). You can see the significant differences in question responses by occupational group in the graphs below.

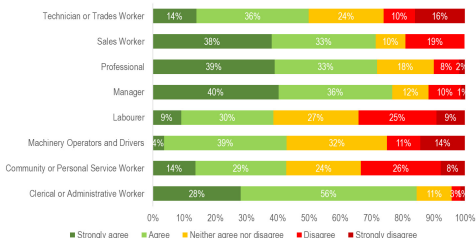
**14. Considering your skills, responsibilities, and achievements in your job, you feel you get paid fairly.**



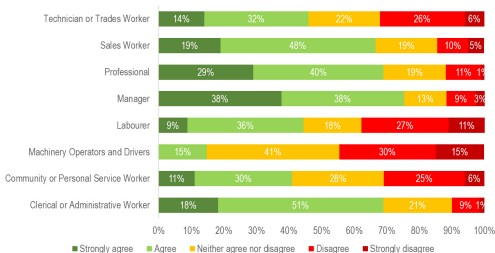
### 19. My job regularly gives me a chance to improve my skills



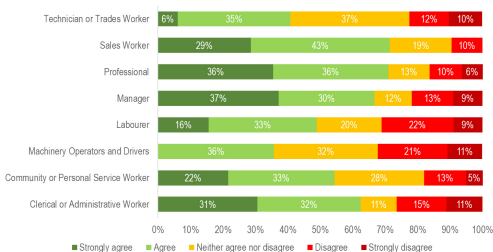
### 22. I feel safe from risk of injury at work



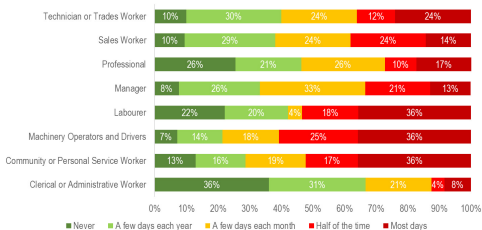
### 30. I can decide how my daily work is organised



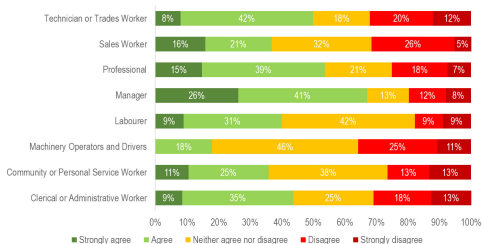
### 32. My manager(s) treat(s) me with dignity and respect



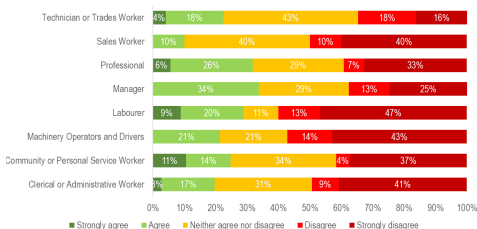
37. How often do you work unsociable hours? (evenings and nights, weekends, or on public holidays)



44. I can influence decisions that are important for my work



49. Over the past 12 months, have you been consulted on health and safety issues at work by your employer or a health an



### g. Length of service

The survey participants show a good representation across the service length groups but over-representing the longer serving cohort (Figure 8).

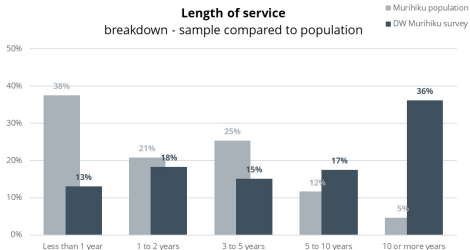
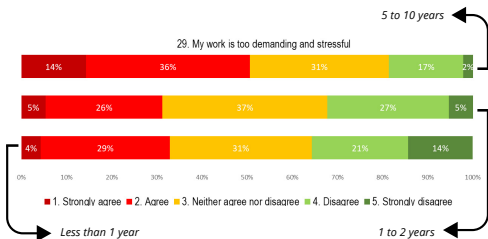
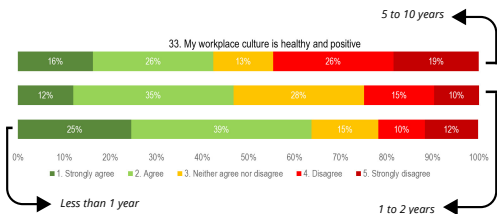


Figure 8 data - Statistics NZ 2021  
 $\chi^2 = 1378.7$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 2.2e-16$

Workers who have been in their job for 5 to 10 years are much more likely to find their work too demanding and stressful compared with workers who have been in their jobs for less than two years.



Workers who had been in their jobs longer were also less likely to agree that their workplace culture was healthy and positive. This may reflect that people can feel more positive and not be so embedded in the workplace culture when they are new to the job.



## Employment type

The proportion of full time, part time and other (casual and contract) workers in Murihiku Southland that responded to the survey exactly represents the distribution of employment types in the region (Figure 9).

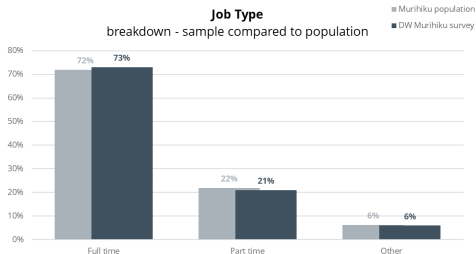


Figure 9 Statistics NZ 2023  
 $\chi^2 = 0.33524$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.8457$

## h. Union membership

50% of respondents were union members, compared to 19.3% union membership in the general working population (NZ Statistics Q4 2023).

## i. Gender

55% of respondents were female, 28% were male and the rest did not respond to the question or preferred not to say. This is compared to the working population of Murihiku Southland which is made up of 53% male and 47% female.

## j. Mean wage

the mean hourly wage for the population of Murihiku Southland is \$33, compared to \$31 in our survey sample (Figure 10).

## Hourly wages

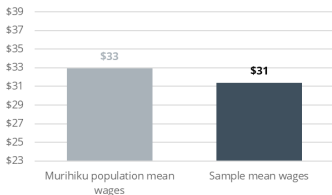
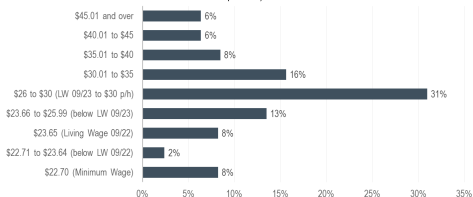


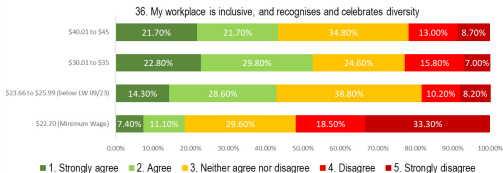
Figure 10 - 378 respondents (64%). Data - NZ Statistics 2023

### Distribution of responses to question 10. What is your hourly rate? (of 378 responses)



For those who reported their wages (N=376), workers who earned higher wages were much less likely to say that they felt they were paid fairly for their contributions. The higher the wage of workers, the more likely they agreed that their job regularly gave them a chance to improve their skills. Those earning a lower hourly rate, were less likely to agree they were free from risk of injury at work. The higher the hourly wage of workers, the more likely they were to also agree that their workplace was inclusive and recognised and celebrated diversity (all at  $\alpha < 0.00$  sig. level).





### k. Mean salary

there were 247 survey respondents who indicated they were earning a salary. On average they were earning much more than the average salary of the Murihiku Southland population (\$82,000 average for the survey respondent earning a salary, compared with an average of \$64,544 in Murihiku Southland) (Figure 11).

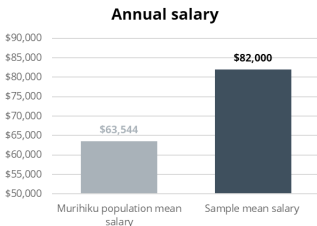
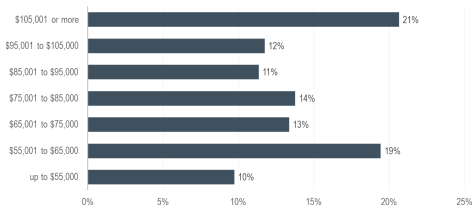


Figure 11 247 respondents (41%). Data – NZ Statistics 2023

Distribution of responses to question 11. If you are paid an annual salary, what is it?  
(of 247 responses)



As would be expected, workers who were paid a lower salary or wage were much more likely to say they couldn't cover the necessities in life with their pay. Otherwise, there were no significant differences in outcomes for workers, other than, for example, for those earning more than \$100,000 in annual salary, where there is a bit less immediate financial stress when losing a job than for those earning a lower salary. When asked about whether they felt they got paid fairly for the contribution they made in their job, those with more than \$100,000 were more likely to agree than those earning less. Otherwise, the results did not significantly vary between the salary groups.

# Conclusion and acknowledgements

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Decent work is critical to a sustainable, thriving economy, and it is, in part, by understanding the experience of workers that we can shape the future of work so that it is decent. This report prepared by E tū, analyses the data from a comprehensive survey of workers in Murihiku Southland drawing on four pou of decent work: Decent wages, secure work, a quality work environment, and workers' voice.

The goal of the survey, launched in April 2023 as a collaborative effort between stakeholders of the Just Transition project, was to feed future planning for the region, including employee engagement, workplace culture, and overall employee satisfaction. The survey report highlights that most workers feel they have secure work, although most are likely to experience financial stress. Most workers surveyed think their work is meaningful although a minority feel they can influence decisions important to their work. These and many other insights create opportunities for all players in the region to better understand the needs and preferences of workers and to recognise that the quality of jobs can be a motivator for positive change in times of immense economic transformation.

It is a privilege for E tū to play a leading role as worker representative in the Just Transition collaboration in Murihiku Southland. We are proud of the contribution we have made to successful dialogue between government, business, community and Iwi, from the Job Match website that enables workers to access "decent work", to this survey report on the experiences of workers in the region.

I thank our E tū team for its dedication to a Just Transition in Murihiku Southland, Massey University for its quality assurance support, and the MBIE Just Transition Unit for its belief and commitment to a vision of stakeholder engagement that would bring all voices to the table, including those least able to be represented, the workers of Murihiku Southland.

**Rachel Mackintosh**

*National Secretary*

**E tū**

