



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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## **NZAA Professional Profile Survey Results**

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### **Introduction**

In 2019 the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) undertook a survey to provide a snapshot of the professional profile of archaeological practitioners in New Zealand. The survey was sent to all NZAA members and to employees of other entities such as Heritage New Zealand, who might not have been current members. It was targeted at those who are employed in some way, full time or part time, as archaeologists, and not necessarily for those who have an archaeological qualification but no longer work in the archaeological arena. This is a summary of the results of that survey, following on from a presentation of the preliminary results at the NZAA AGM in Rakiura in August 2019.

The state of the New Zealand archaeological workforce was last summarised in Walton and O’Keefe (2004: 278-280) and where appropriate, current results are compared to those in that paper. Methodologically the survey drew upon similar approaches undertaken in Australia over the past 10 years (see Ulm *et al.* 2013), however a detailed comparison of those and other international surveys from other parts of the world are beyond the scope of this summary at this stage.

### **Age and Gender**

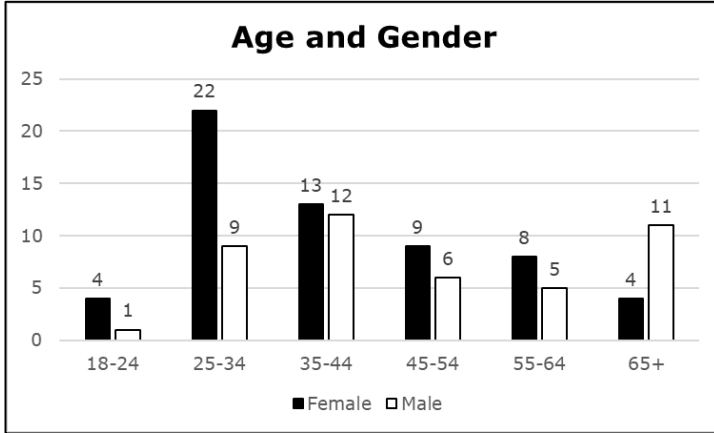
There were 113 respondents to the survey, of which 61 were female, 49 were male and 3 preferred not to answer the gender question. The results of the age and gender questions suggest that the gender split has moved significantly from 2004, where 58% of the workforce was male; this survey saw a majority of respondents (54% identifying as female. This shift is even more stark when age is taken into account: while 58% of all respondents were aged 45 and under (suggesting a workforce that is relatively young overall), the vast majority of respondents in the 45 and under category were female (64%, see Figure 1).

### **Ethnic identity**

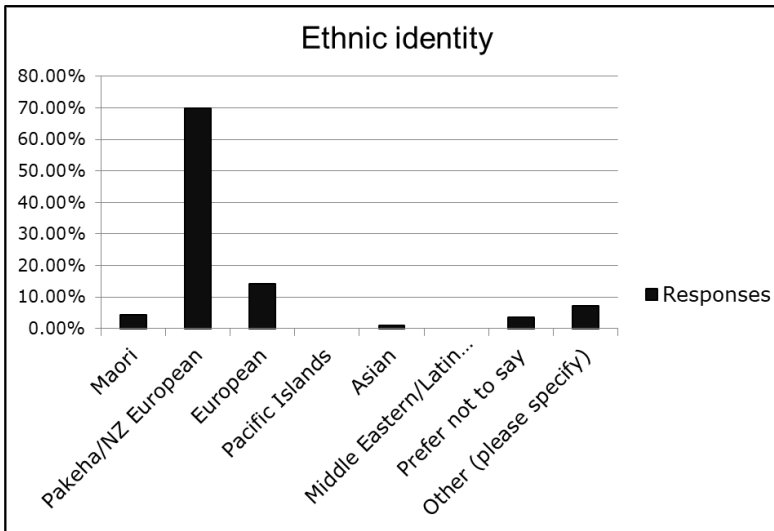
The majority of respondents identified as Pākehā/NZ European (Figure 2), although most of the “other” category identified as both Pākehā/NZ European and Māori. It must be noted that as the survey allowed for only one ethnic identity to be recorded (this was less than ideal; in future, surveys will allow for more than

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one box to be ticked) the results for this question may be somewhat skewed, however the picture presented of a workforce that is predominantly Pakehā/NZ European is probably accurate.



*Figure 1*  
*Age & gender distribution.*



*Figure 2*  
*Ethnic identity distribution.*

## Geographic area of work

This question was designed to identify which regions archaeologists were working in and respondents could chose up to 3 options. The results could be seen to follow national population demographics and areas of development and expansion in particular; the Auckland region recorded the highest number of archaeologists working, with Canterbury and Otago/Southland second and third respectively. The Waikato/Coromandel and Bay of Plenty/East Coast regions also see significant activity. Somewhat surprisingly there does seem to be a lower number of archaeologists working in the centre of the country (including the Wellington region). Whether this reflects development pressures (or lack thereof), distance from universities teaching archaeology, a dearth of archaeologists in an area that needs more, or some other quirk of the sampling strategy, is something that will need further investigation.

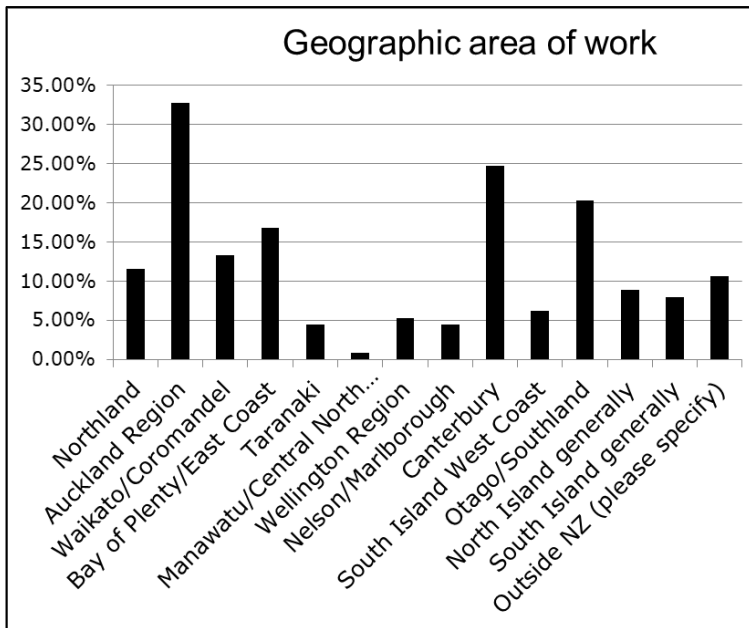
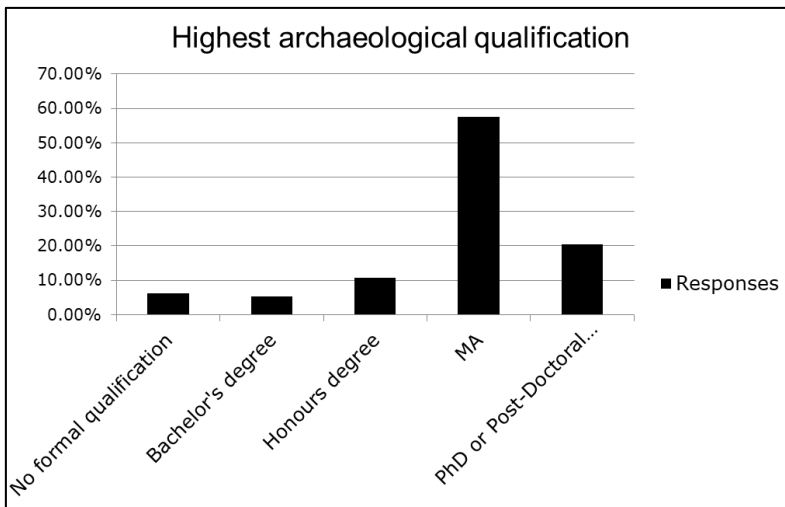


Figure 3  
Geographic area of work of respondents.

## **Archaeological qualifications**

As noted by Walton and O’Keefe (2004: 279) archaeology is a graduate profession, and in 2004, 55% of the workforce had a master’s degree. This survey saw a similar result, with just over 57% of respondents recording a master’s degree as their highest qualification. A smaller percentage had doctorates (20% as opposed to 30% in 2004), possibly reflecting the Heritage New Zealand guidelines stipulating a master’s degree in archaeology as the minimum requirement for approval of a person to carry out an activity under an archaeological authority (HNZ Archaeological Guidelines Series No.10). Interestingly, of those practitioners recording a bachelor’s or honours degree as their highest qualification (and as such unable to gain approval in their own right to carry out an activity under an archaeological authority), the majority (67%) are working in the Canterbury and /or Otago/Southland regions, suggesting there may be a regional shortage of approved persons in those areas.



*Figure 4*  
*Highest archaeological qualification of respondents.*

The majority of archaeologists in New Zealand are New Zealand trained/qualified, with 80% of respondents recording that NZ was the country where their highest archaeological qualification was obtained. The second most common region was the UK at 9% (Figure 5).

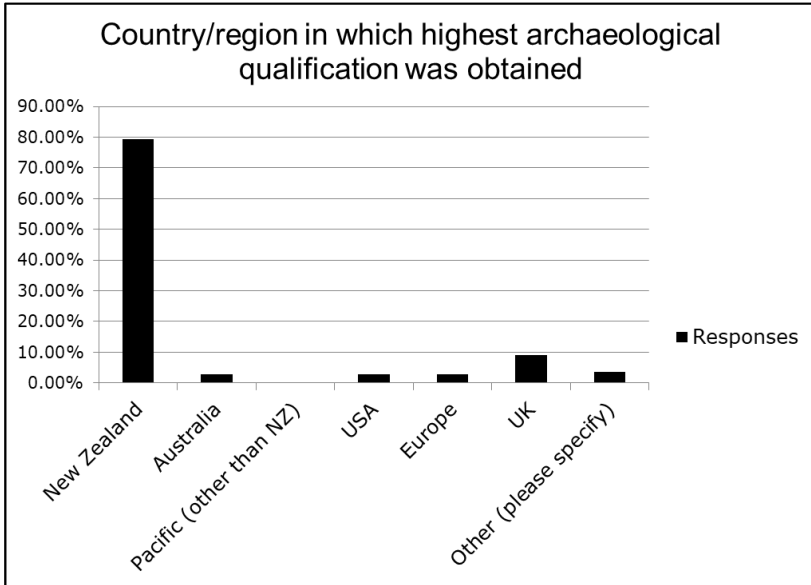


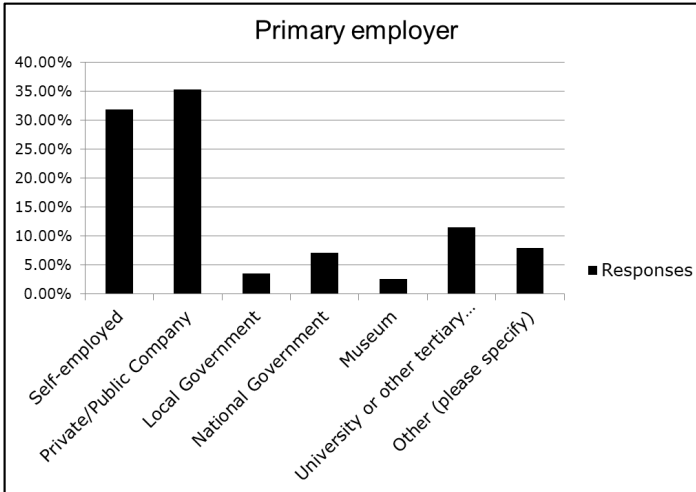
Figure 5  
Country in which archaeological qualifications were obtained.

## Employment

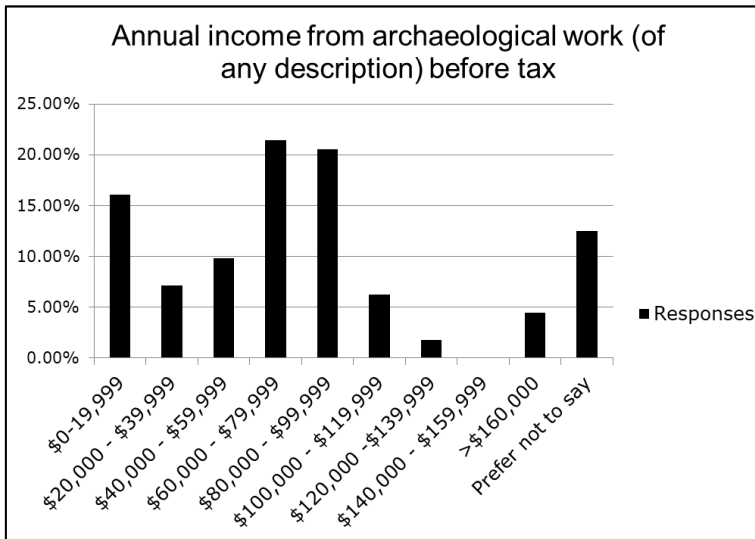
Over 66% of respondents are employed in the private sector (self-employed or working for a private/public company), up from 51% in 2003 (Walton and O’Keefe 2004: 279), no doubt reflecting the increase in population-driven development and infrastructure work over the past 20 years. Just over 11% of respondents were employed by universities or other tertiary institutions and just over 10% were employed by national or local government. Museums employed less than 3% of respondents, down from 10% in 2003.

In line with the methodology set out in Ulm *et al.* (2013), annual earnings from archaeological work, before tax, was surveyed. Of the respondents who answered this question (it had the highest percentage of “Prefer not to say” responses at 12.5%), the majority earn over \$60,000 per annum, before tax (Figure 7). Most are earning in the region of \$60,000-\$100,000. The majority of those earning in the bottom bracket (\$0-\$19,000) recorded themselves as retired or as students. A breakdown of annual incomes based on employer, is set out in Figure 8.

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*Figure 6*  
*Primary employer of respondents.*



*Figure 7*  
*Annual income from archaeological work (before tax).*

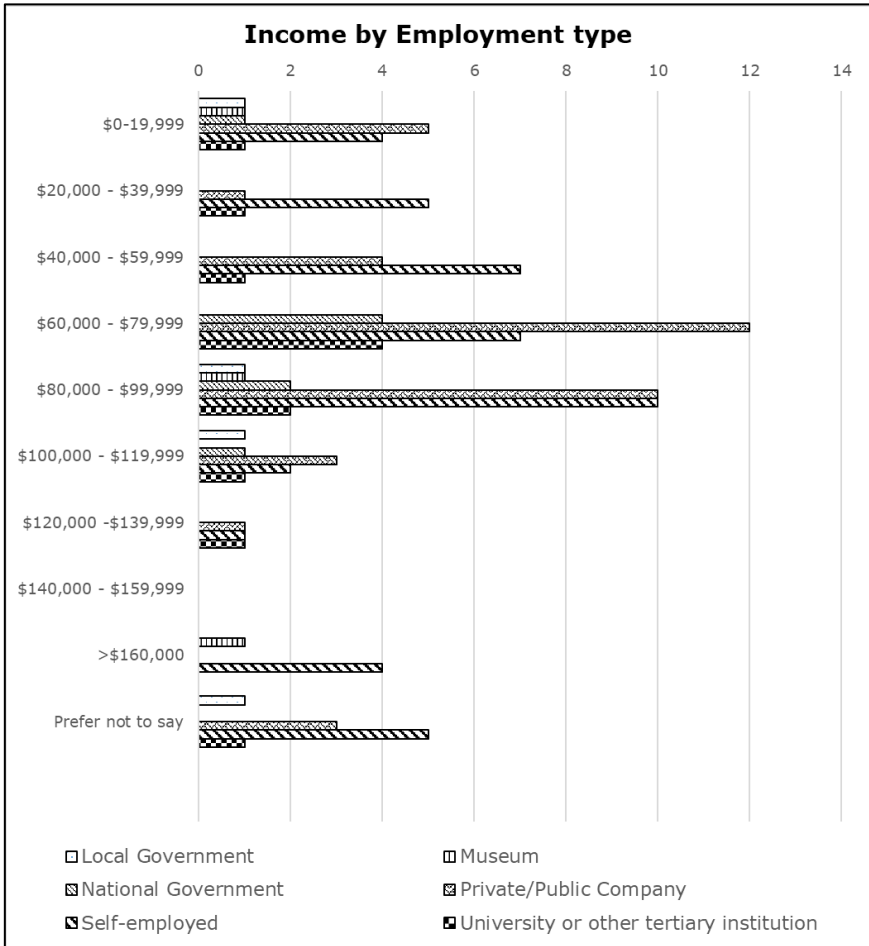
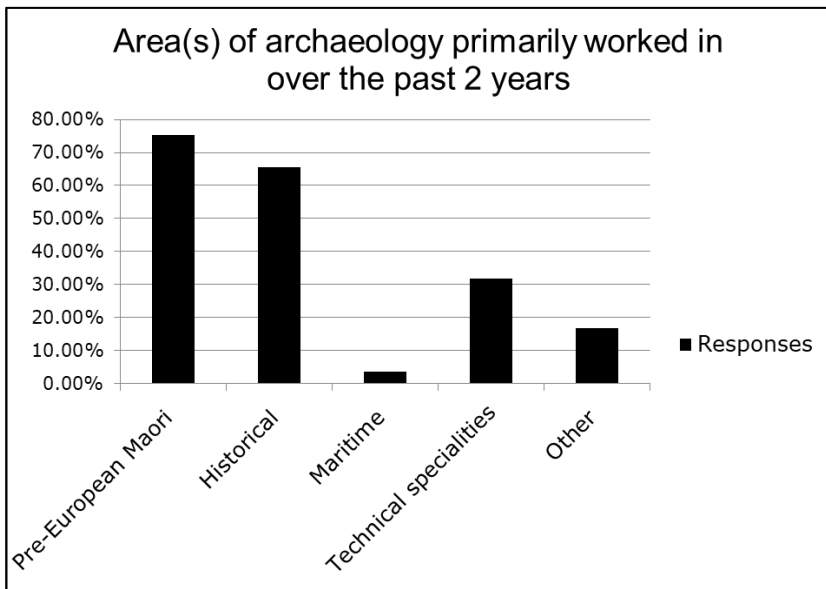


Figure 8  
Income by employment type.



## **Areas of Work**

Respondents were surveyed as to the sub-disciplines of archaeology they spent most of their time working in over the previous 2 years. This question allowed multiple selections, and the “technical specialties” category included such areas as osteoarchaeology, Geographic Information Systems, faunal analysis and excavation. The results indicate a degree of generalisation across the archaeological community, and the fact that well over 60% of respondents noted they worked in historical archaeology, suggests that further specific education in that field at university level would be welcomed.



*Figure 9*  
*Area of archaeological work of respondents.*

## **Continuing Professional Development**

As Walton and O’Keeffe (2004: 279) noted, in New Zealand: “...the relatively small size of the archaeological workforce tends to exacerbate the professional issues relating to standards and training.” The Professional Development Cell previously run through the NZAA is currently inactive, however the NZAA

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council intends to develop a series of professional development workshops and seminars to help meet the demand for continuing archaeological professional development.

To this end the final question of the survey canvassed opinions about what areas of archaeological theory and practice respondents would like to see incorporated into future professional development seminars. Most options seemed to have a broad appeal, however three areas in particular stood out, with over 40% of respondents in each case indicating an interest in further learning. These were “Indigenous consultation,” “Geographic Information Systems (GIS)” and “Current Archaeological Theory.” Accordingly a subcommittee of the NZAA council is, together with the Māori Advisory Group, currently developing frameworks for the delivery of workshops and seminars on those three areas as a priority.

*Table 1*

*Areas and specialities that respondents would be interested in learning more about.*

<b>What areas/specialities would you be interested in attending seminars on?</b>		
<i>Answer Choices</i>	<i>Responses</i>	
<b><u>Indigenous consultation</u></b>	<b><u>41.59%</u></b>	47
Field survey	32.74%	37
Excavation techniques	33.63%	38
Historical artefact analysis	36.28%	41
Buildings recording	32.74%	37
Database management	31.86%	36
<b><u>GIS</u></b>	<b><u>41.59%</u></b>	47
Faunal analysis	26.55%	30
<b><u>Current archaeological theory</u></b>	<b><u>42.48%</u></b>	48
Stone artefact analysis	32.74%	37
Heritage conservation	39.82%	45
Heritage legislation	37.17%	42
Human skeletal remains analysis	33.63%	38

## **Conclusion**

The NZAA Professional profile survey results provide a useful insight into the current New Zealand professional archaeological landscape, and it is intended that it is the first of regular surveys on the subject. Even with limited previous data, changes can be seen over the past 17 or so years since the subject was last examined: a greater percentage of archaeologists employed in the private sector and a shifting gender mix to a majority of female practitioners, for example. Previously unexamined areas such as ethnic identity and practice regions and sub disciplines will also help policy formation with respect to future training and regulation. And data on income might convince a few prospective archaeologists that while the profession might not make you rich, you shouldn't starve doing a job you love either.

## **References**

- Ulm, S., Mate, G., Dalley, C., and Nichols, S. (2013) A working profile: the changing face of professional archaeology in Australia. *Australian Archaeology* 76:1, 34-43.
- Walton, A., and O'Keefe, M. (2004) Archaeological Heritage Management. In Furey, L. and Holdaway, S. (eds) *Change Through Time: 50 Years of New Zealand Archaeology*. New Zealand Archaeological Association Monograph 26.