

Insights on New Zealand Sustainability Professionals

2022 Report



Foreword

Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact New Zealand's borders and businesses, creating a pressure cooker environment with labour shortages, supply chain disruptions, and increasing costs. The ongoing wellbeing and resilience of New Zealand workers has been tested, as people persevere or resign, and cope with the disruption and health impacts of Omicron.

Despite this, the business agenda for sustainability has continued to grow, as environmental regulation takes shape, and the commercial imperative sharpens. We have seen growth in the memberships of Sustainable Business Council and Sustainable Business Network, 23,000 organisations having used SBN's Climate Action Toolbox since it was launched last year. There has been steady enrolment of students in sustainability courses and growth in compulsory sustainability courses in all business degrees at AUT, as well as growing demand from clients seeking sustainability services at Oxygen Consulting.

With this backdrop, our 2022 research asks three key questions: How well are we meeting today's demand for sustainability? What are the future challenges? What can be done to continue to grow the sustainability profession?

Three bold findings arise from this research:

1. Organisations are meeting today's sustainability demand with growing maturity:

- ↑ Effective resourcing, growth in roles
- ↑ Greater embedding of sustainability
- ↑ Governance and senior leadership engagement progressing
- ↑ Less talk and more action
- ↑ Engaged and supported sustainability professionals

2. There are challenges that may impact our ability to effectively address sustainability in future:

- ➔ Risk of burn out of existing sustainability professionals
- ➔ Organisational capability required in future
- ➔ Individual competencies required in future roles
- ➔ Existing diversity challenges in the profession
- ➔ Successional pathway between academia and career

3. There are practical ways to address these challenges and continue to grow the sustainability profession:

- Educational institutions could refine how sustainability is shaped into their offering
- Organisations could increase their engagement with formal learning and education
- Organisations should continue to embed sustainability within the business
- Organisations should seek to integrate te ao Māori principles into sustainability
- Recruiters and organisations could further incorporate diversity and inclusion in recruitment processes
- Students can take more purposeful action on their academic pathway

Foreword

It is worth pausing to celebrate the first point, that despite the pressure organisations have been under in the past year, they have been able to meet the growing demand for sustainability. Furthermore, sustainability is showing signs of becoming more embedded in organisational DNA – this is a major turning point, where sustainability in the past has often been treated in silo to the organisational strategy. We are seeing the capacity of dedicated sustainability roles growing, other business roles increasingly having sustainability responsibilities added to them, continued growth in sustainability resourcing, and professionals feeling supported in their roles through improved governance and team connection.

This will need to continue to grow and evolve, as there are challenges ahead for the profession; remaining static will not be an option as issues such as climate change and inequality accelerate and place further urgency for solutions from businesses and sustainability professionals. Our research raises some red flags on our ability to meet tomorrow's requirements for sustainability, with potential capability gaps, diversity challenges and levels of fatigue rising in the existing sustainability workforce. Bridging the gap between learning and working in sustainability will also be a critical enabler to building capacity within the sustainability profession and within organisations.

We propose practical take-outs for different audiences seeking to address these challenges. These are our ideas and suggestions, as we reflect on three years of data and look to further serve the purpose of this research, which aims to help grow the sustainability profession.

In its third year, we are beginning to see trends emerging through this research, painting a clear picture defining the role of the sustainability professional – the capability requirements, core competencies, and how the role is structured and supported by organisations. The last part of our report provides a description of the role of the sustainability professional.

We welcome your feedback and the opportunity to support your sustainability journey through this research.

Dr Sarah Holden, Director Oxygen Consulting

“ Remaining static will not be an option as issues such as climate change and inequality accelerate and place further urgency for solutions from businesses and sustainability professionals.

Methodology

2022 Insights on New Zealand Sustainability Professionals provides a holistic view of the current state of the sustainability profession in New Zealand – the role requirements, wellbeing of those in sustainability jobs, future growth areas and the way in which organisations are structuring and resourcing sustainability.

This report reflects the results of a survey which ran from 8th February – 8th March 2022. The survey was made publicly available to potential participants through the networks of Oxygen Consulting, Auckland University of Technology (AUT), Sustainable Business Council (SBC) and Sustainable Business Network (SBN), relevant industry associations, as well as a range of social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook.

Target participants for this research included any employed people who currently had 'sustainability' as part or all of their role. 'Sustainability' included responsibilities that address the social, environmental and economic risks to the organisation. The scope included anyone in full time, part time or contractual positions within public, private, non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations. Sustainability professionals who may have been made redundant in the last 12 months did not qualify to participate in this research.

Information was gathered at an industry group level only, with a focus on the sustainability professionals employed in New Zealand organisations. Organisational sustainability strategies and activities were out of the scope of this research.

Anonymity of participants was maintained through the aggregation of results. Furthermore, personal information that could be used to identify individuals (e.g. names, email addresses, workplace names), was not collected.

As the third concurrent year of this research, the 2022 sustainability professionals research compares trends and findings with the 2020 and 2021 research where relevant. 157 people participated in the research in 2022 compared with 113 in 2021 and 130 in 2020.

Wellbeing data was compared against an equivalent AUT general professionals data set for 2020, 2021 and 2022. 441 people participated in this survey group in 2022 compared with 441 in 2021 and 442 in 2020. This was used to compare the New Zealand sustainability industry against New Zealand professionals from a variety of alternate industries.

The research was conducted in accordance with AUT's Ethics Committee processes (AUTEC Reference number 21/456).



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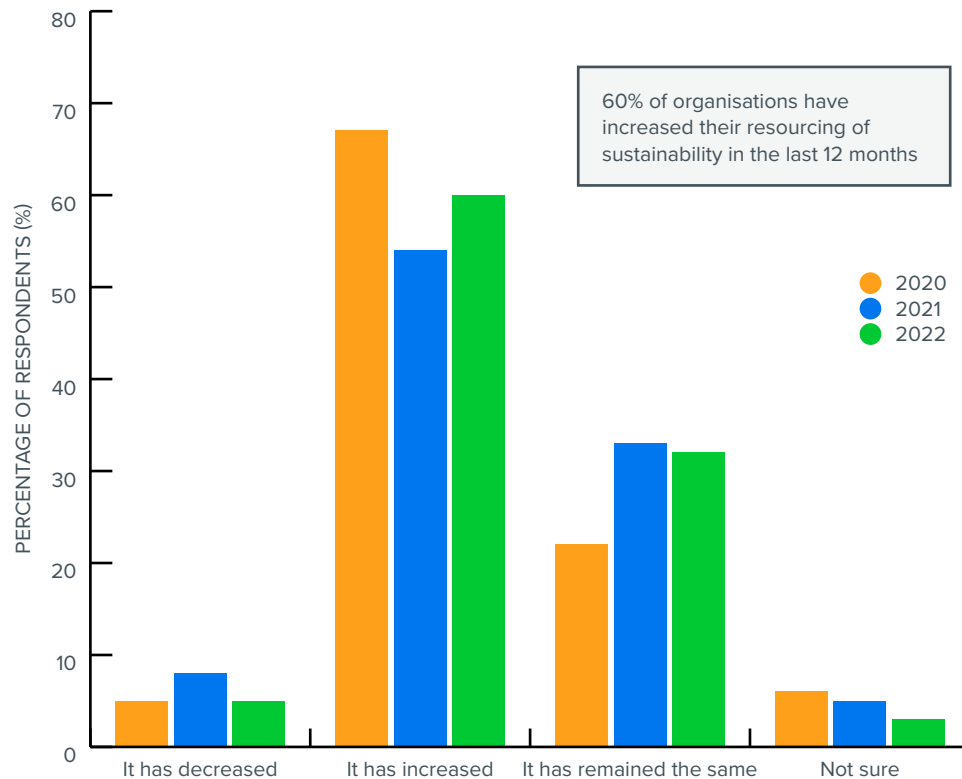
Organisations are meeting today's sustainability demand with growing maturity:

- ↑ Effective resourcing, growth in roles
- ↑ Greater embedding of sustainability
- ↑ Governance and senior leadership engagement progressing
- ↑ Less talk and more action
- ↑ Engaged and supported sustainability professionals

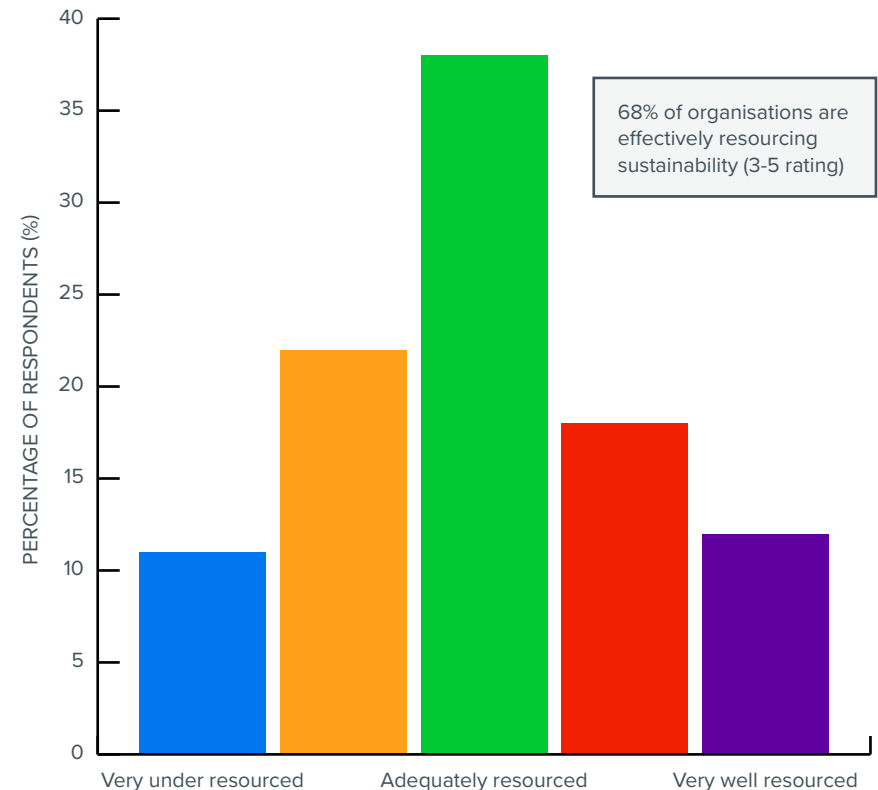


Organisations have continued to increase their resourcing of sustainability.

Level of change in resourcing of organisational sustainability in the last 12 months



How well organisations are resourcing their sustainability agendas

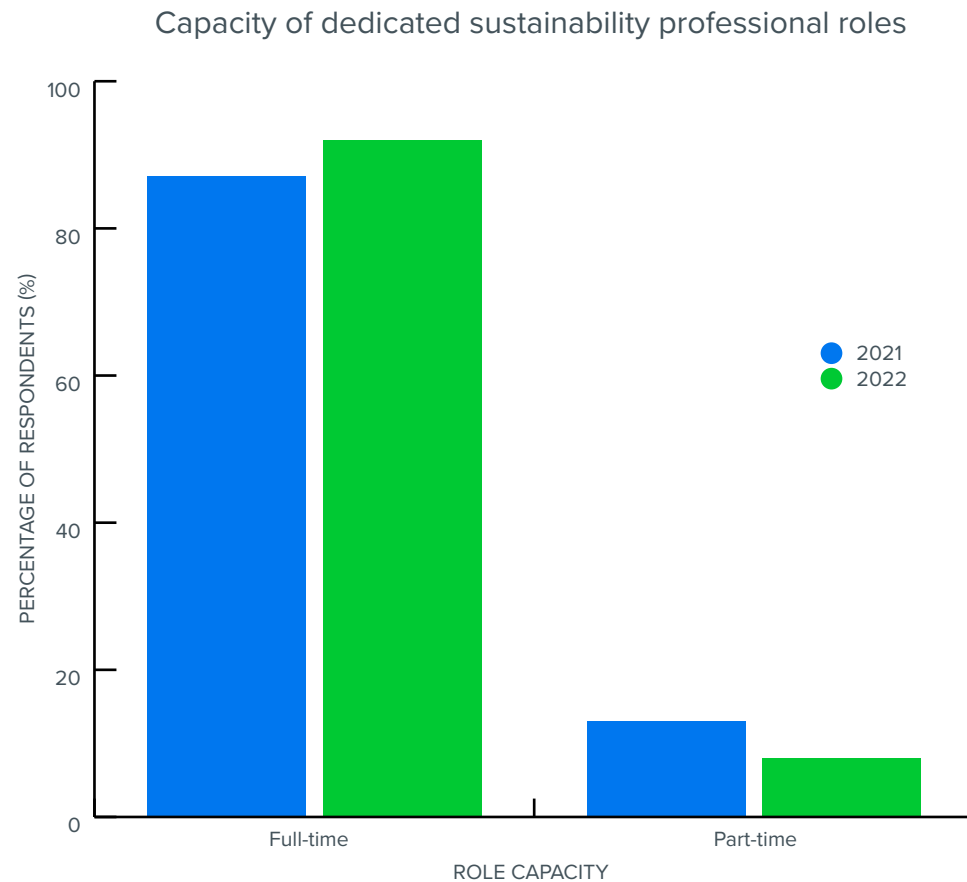


“ Investment in sustainability is increasing over time and we have a clear set of objectives and sufficient organisational support and autonomy to progress these.

Question: Has there been any change in sustainability resourcing in the last 12 months?

Question: How well is your organisation resourcing its sustainability agenda? 1 = Very under resourced, 5 = Very well resourced.

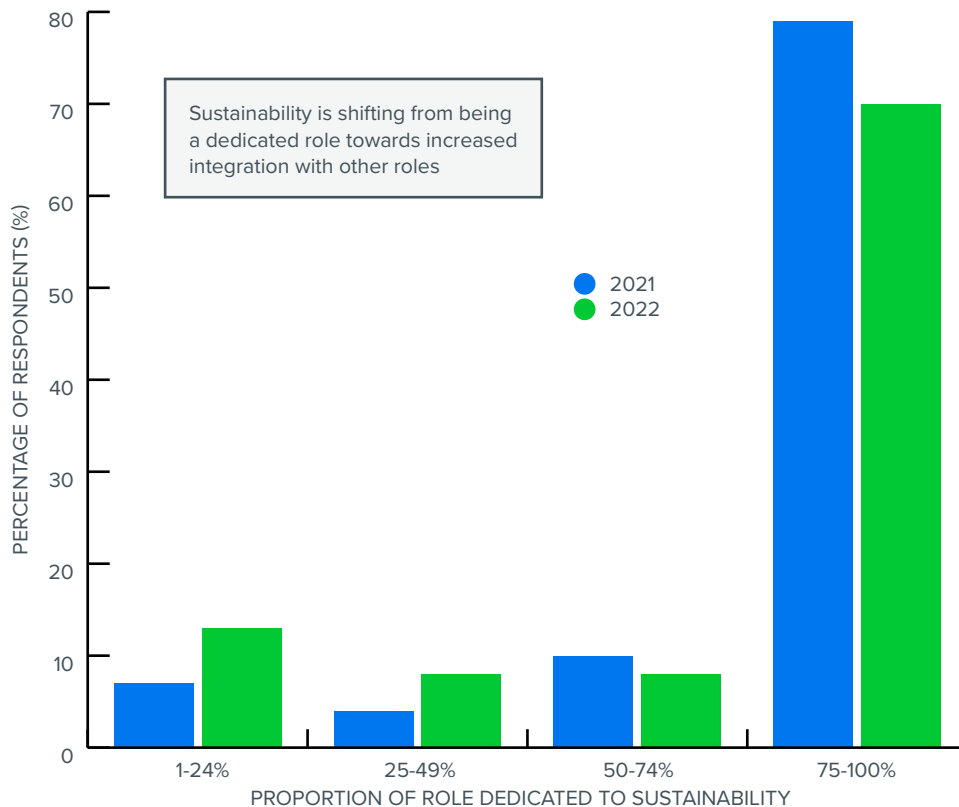
For those in dedicated sustainability roles, more are now in full-time positions.



Question: How much of your role is focused on sustainability?
Question: What is the capacity of your role?

Organisations are beginning to embed sustainability into other roles.

Proportion of role focused on sustainability



Additional responsibilities of professionals in non-dedicated sustainability roles

| Responsibility outside of sustainability | Proportion of respondents | | Change |
|--|---------------------------|------|--------|
| | 2020 | 2021 | |
| Operations Management | 19% | 39% | ↑ |
| Marketing | 14% | 24% | ↑ |
| Human Resources | 7% | 15% | ↑ |
| Procurement/Supply Chain | 9% | 14% | ↑ |
| Customer Service | 9% | 13% | ↑ |
| Environmental | 35% | 36% | ↑ |
| Sales | N/A | 21% | ↑ |
| Administration | 16% | 16% | — |
| Health and Safety/Compliance | 9% | 9% | — |
| Strategy | 40% | 30% | ↓ |
| Communications | 37% | 30% | ↓ |
| Other | 21% | 17% | ↓ |
| Government/External relations | 26% | 24% | ↓ |



Increase in respondents



Decrease in respondents



Unchanged



Significant change

Question: How much of your role is focused on sustainability?

Question: If not 100%, what other responsibilities do you have outside of a sustainability focus?

Sustainability is gradually moving out of a dedicated division, towards integration with other business units.

Location of sustainability roles within the organisation

| Division responsible for sustainability | Proportion of respondents | | Change |
|---|---------------------------|------|--------|
| | 2021 | 2022 | |
| Sustainability/Corporate responsibility | 23% | 13% | ↓ |
| Main purpose of business (e.g. sustainability consulting) | 16% | 20% | ↑ |
| Human resources/People | 8% | 7% | ↓ |
| Government/Legal/Regulatory | 8% | 5% | ↓ |
| Strategy | 6% | 8% | ↑ |
| Corporate/External affairs | 6% | 7% | ↑ |
| Corporate services | 5% | 5% | — |
| CEO | 4% | 5% | ↑ |
| Facilities | 4% | 1% | ↓ |
| Operations | 4% | 3% | ↓ |
| Property & Infrastructure | 3% | 3% | — |
| Finance | 3% | 1% | ↓ |
| Executive | 2% | 3% | ↑ |
| Environment | 2% | 3% | ↑ |
| Marketing & Communications | 2% | 2% | — |
| Planning | 2% | 1% | ↓ |
| No specific division | 1% | 11% | ↑ |
| Customer & Sales | 1% | 2% | ↑ |
| Administration | 1% | 1% | — |
| Health and Safety | 0% | 1% | ↑ |



Increase in respondents



Decrease in respondents

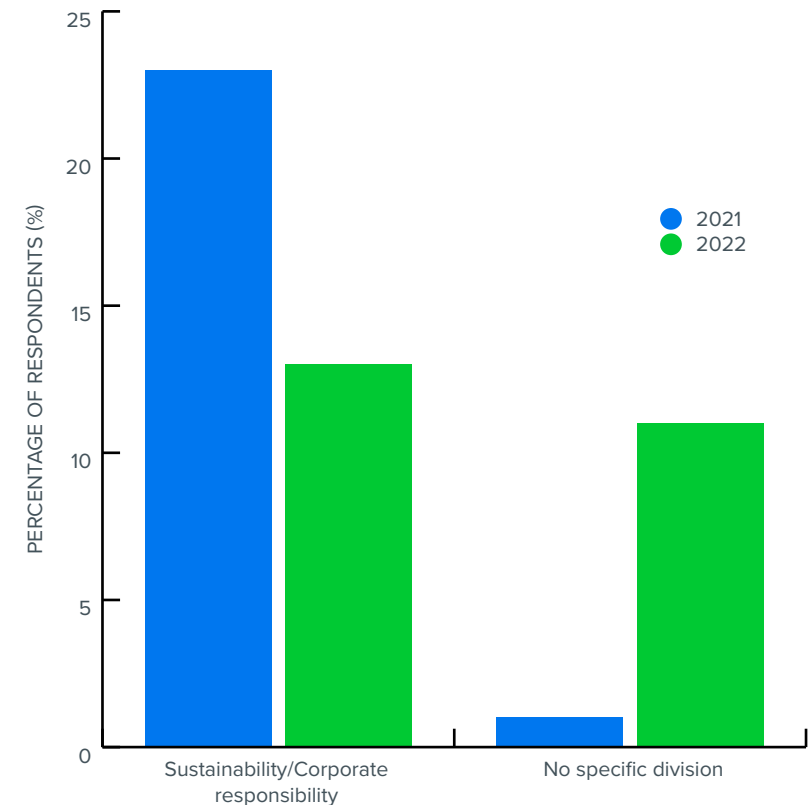


Unchanged



Significant change

Organisational division responsible for sustainability

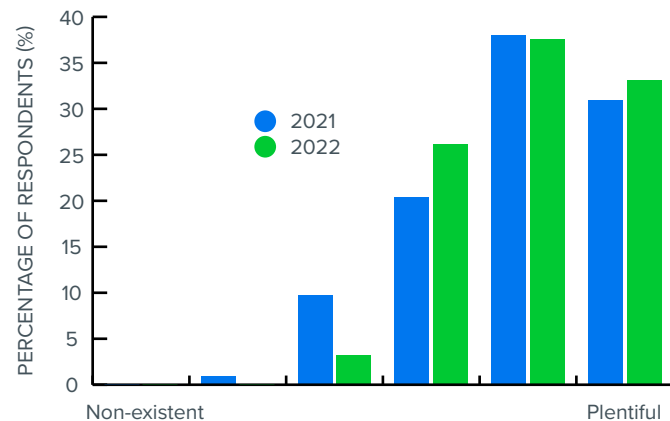


“ I have regular dealings with other teams across the business, at multiple levels. We constantly work to embed sustainability into other areas of the business so that it doesn't operate in isolation

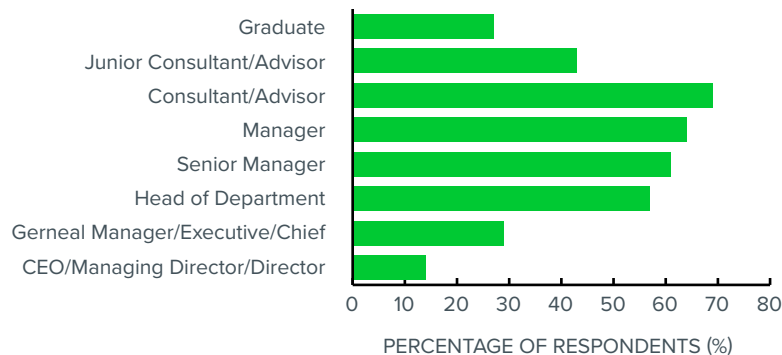
Question: What division does sustainability belong to in your organisation?

Career opportunities remain strong, particularly for mid-management positions and in utilities, construction and management consulting.

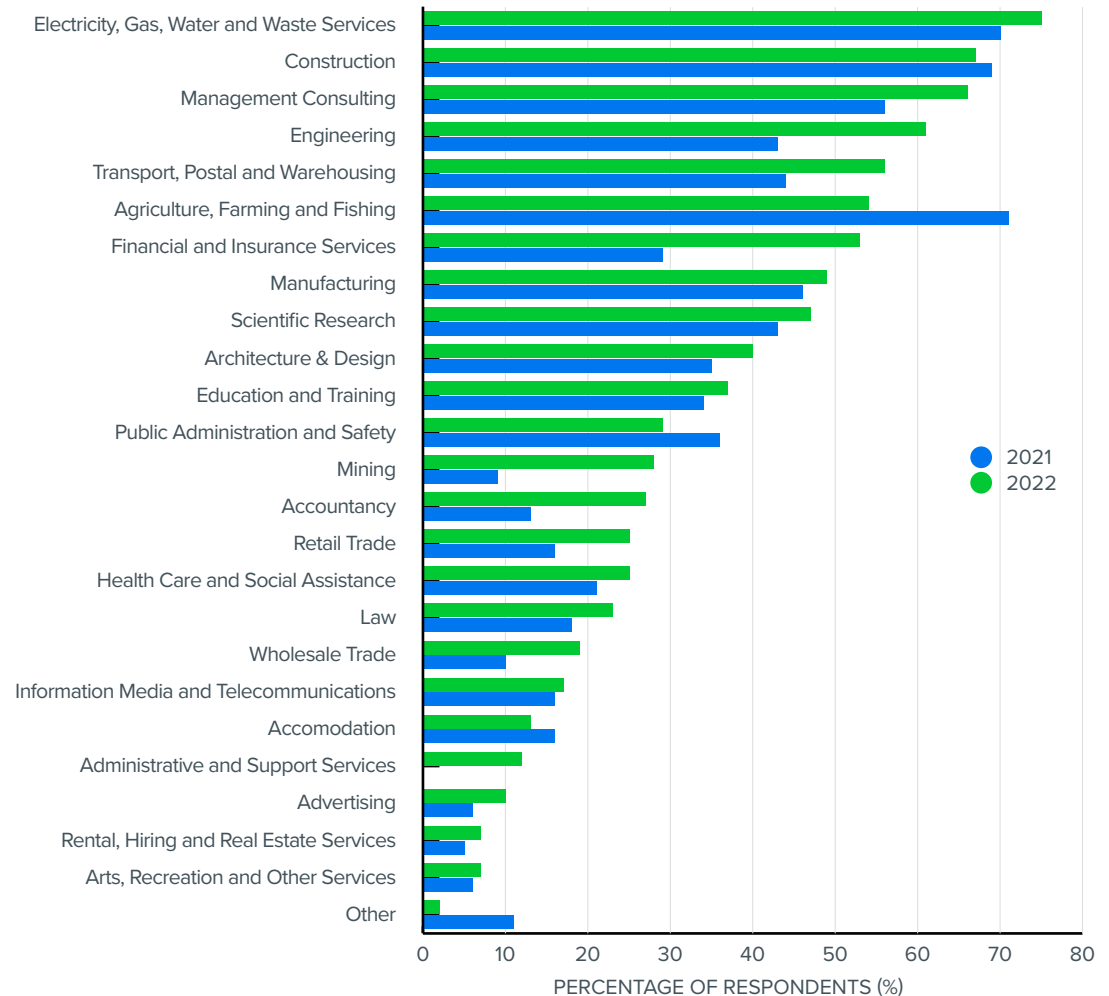
Career opportunities in sustainability



Career opportunities by management position



Career opportunities by industry

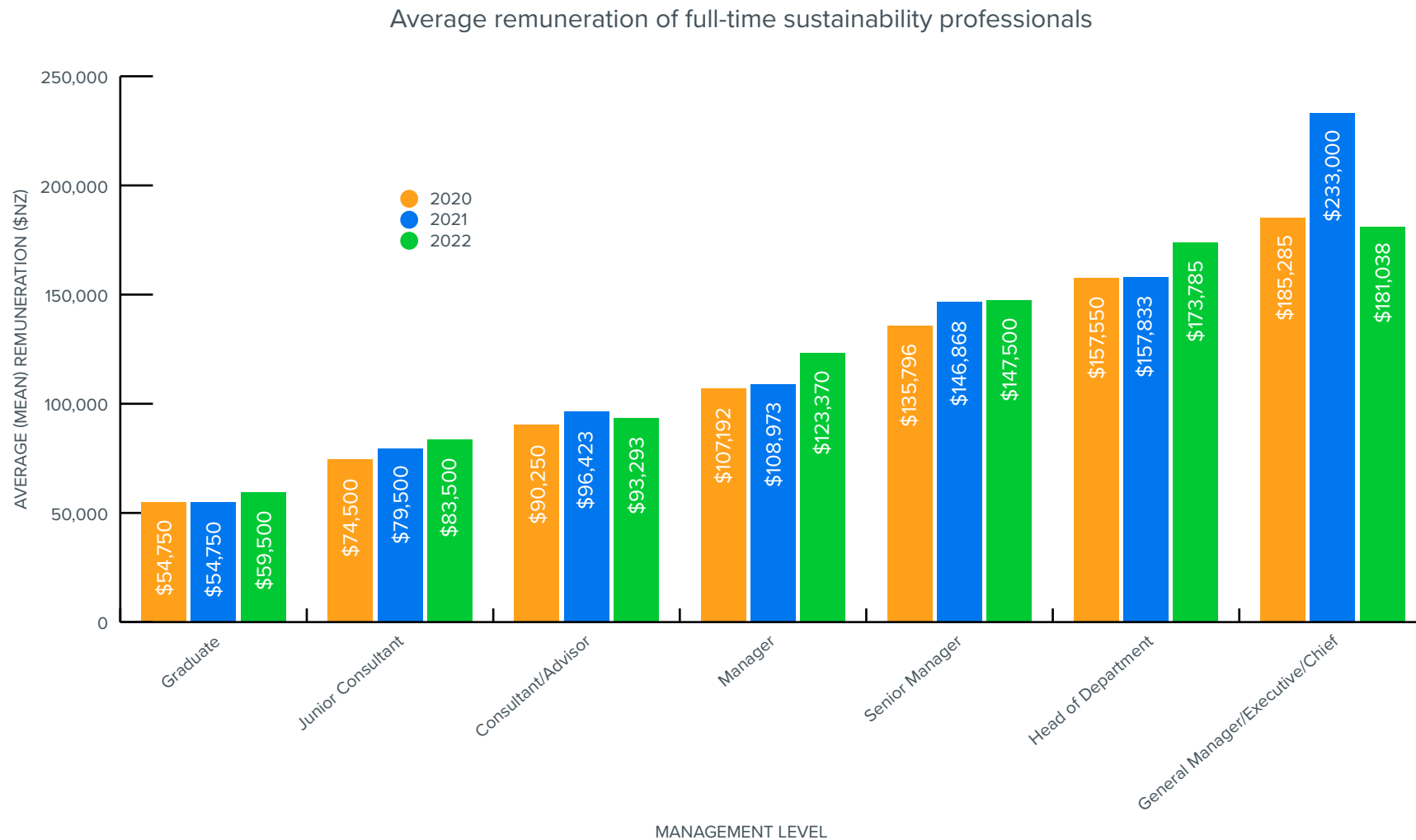


Question: How would you rate the career opportunities in sustainability right now? 0 = Non-existent, 5 = Plentiful.

Question: At what management level do you see these career opportunities right now? Select all that apply.

Question: In which industries do you see these career opportunities right now? Select all that apply.

Remuneration has increased across most management levels.

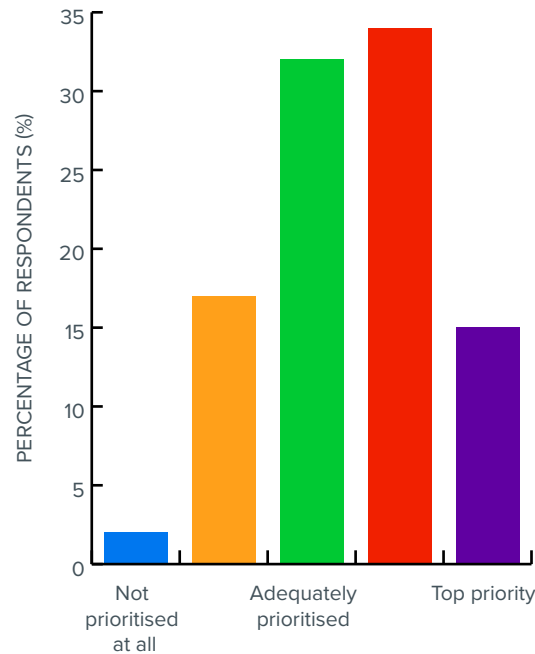


Question: What is the management level of your role?
Question: What is the capacity of your role?
Question: What is the total remuneration band for your role?

Governance is progressing and organisations are prioritising sustainability well.

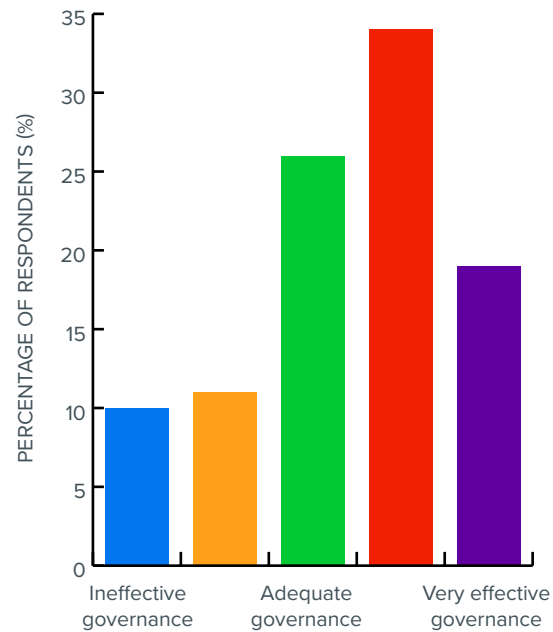
Prioritisation of sustainability in relation to other organisational objectives

81% think their organisations are prioritising sustainability (3-5 rating)



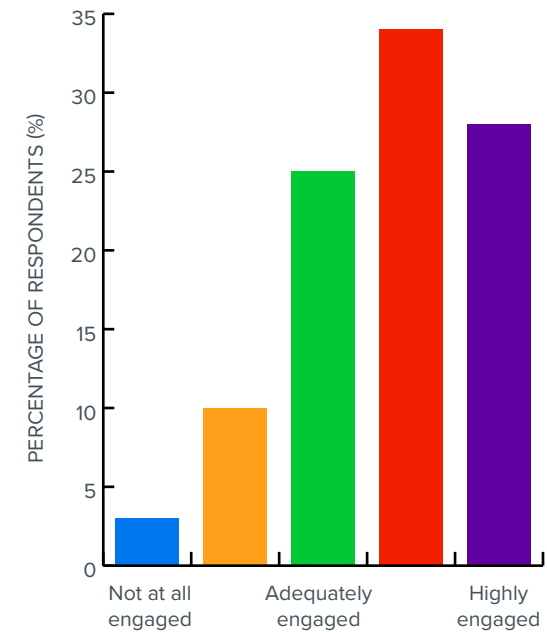
Effectiveness of sustainability governance in organisations

79% think their organisations have effective sustainability governance (3-5 rating)



Engagement of senior leaders on organisational sustainability activities

87% think senior leaders in their organisations are engaged on sustainability (3-5 rating)



“ I have close relationships with executive leadership, and meet with Board. Leadership team are very keen to see progression.

Question: How well is sustainability prioritised in relation to other organisational objectives? 1 = Not prioritised at all, 5 = Top priority.

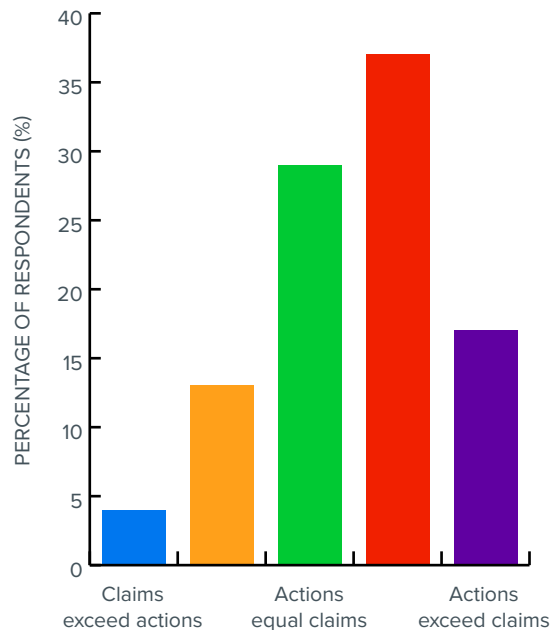
Question: Is there effective sustainability governance in your organisation? 1 = Ineffective governance, 5 = Very effective governance.

Question: How engaged are senior leaders on your organisational sustainability programmes/activities? 1 = Not at all engaged, 5 = Highly engaged.

There is less talk and more action on sustainability in organisations.

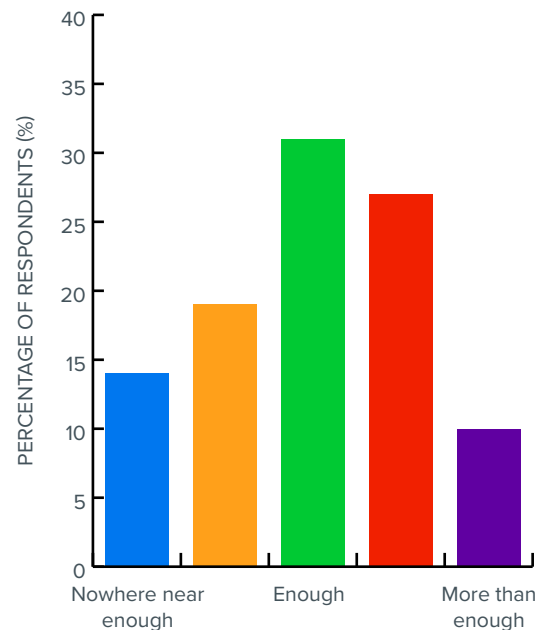
Organisational sustainability claims vs actions on sustainability

54% believe their organisation's sustainability actions are more than what they claim (3-5 rating)



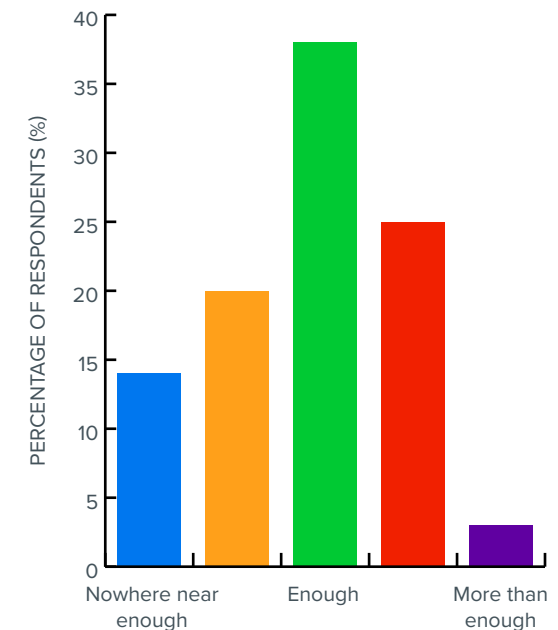
Actions of organisations to address current environmental problems

68% believe their organisation is doing enough to address current environmental problems (3-5 rating)



Actions of organisations to address current social problems

66% believe their organisation is doing enough to address current social problems (3-5 rating)

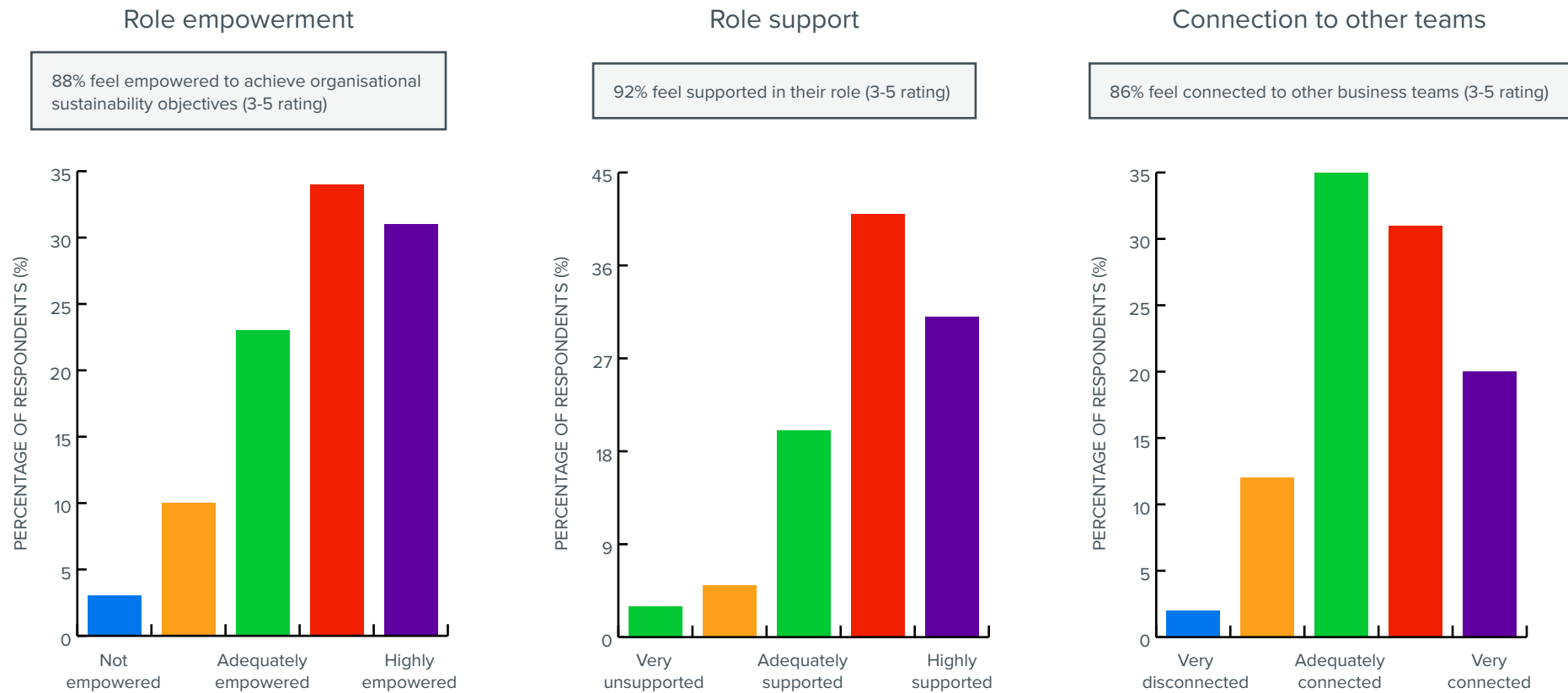


Question: Do you think your organisation's sustainability claims are backed up with effective action? 1 = Claims exceed actions, 5 = Actions exceed claims.

Question: Do you believe your organisation is doing enough to address current environmental problems? 1 = Nowhere near enough, 5 = More than enough.

Question: Do you believe your organisation is doing enough to address current social problems? 1 = Nowhere near enough, 5 = More than enough.

Sustainability professionals feel empowered, supported, and connected to other business teams in their organisations.



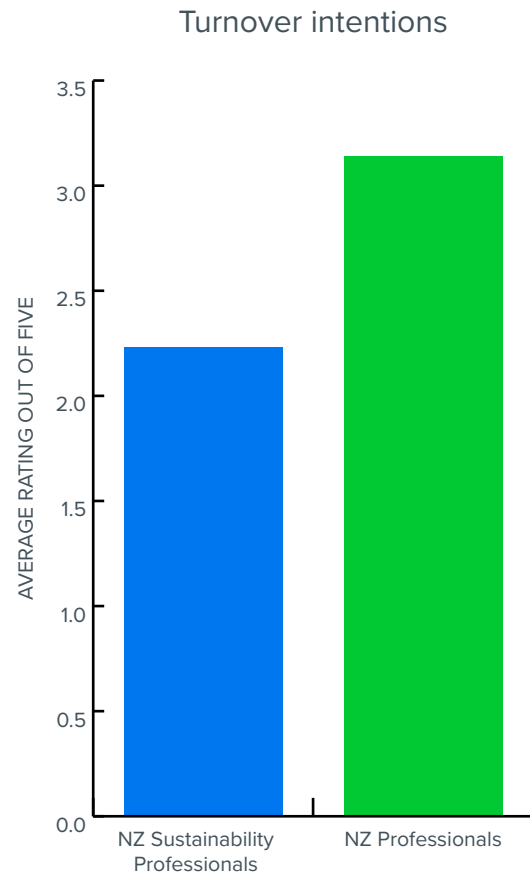
“ I am surrounded by colleagues willing to work collaboratively to improve our organisation’s sustainability performance.

Question: How empowered is your role to achieve the organisational sustainability objectives? 1 = Not empowered, 5 = Highly empowered.

Question: How supported do you feel in your role? 1 = Very supported, 5 = Highly supported.

Question: How connected do you feel your role is to other business teams? 1 = Very disconnected, 5 = Very connected.

Sustainability professionals are less likely to leave their organisations compared to other New Zealand professionals.



1 = Low turnover intentions, 5 = High turnover intentions.

Question: I am thinking about leaving my organisation. 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Question: I am planning to look for a new job. 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Question: I intend to ask people about new job opportunities. 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Question: I don't plan to be at my organisation much longer. 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

Question: I am considering leaving to work in another country. 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree.

“ I love my job and love making impact

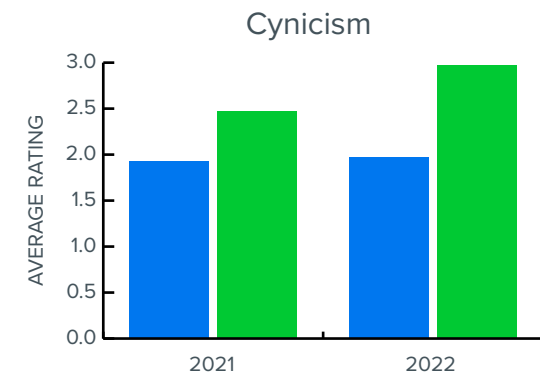
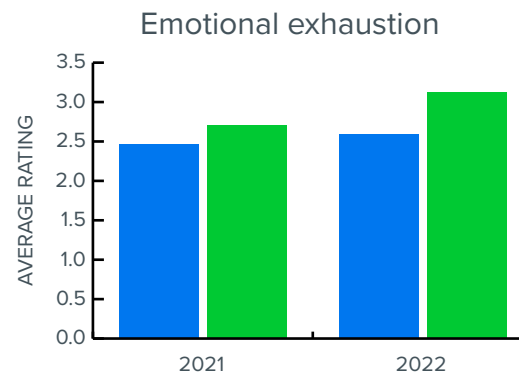
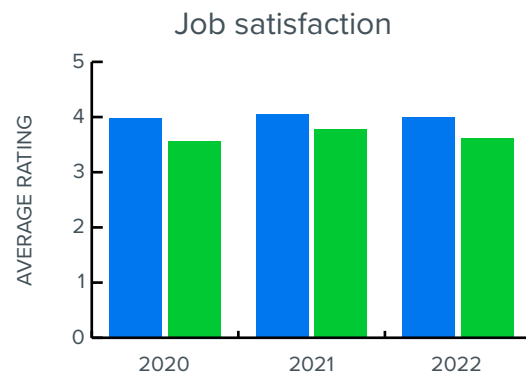
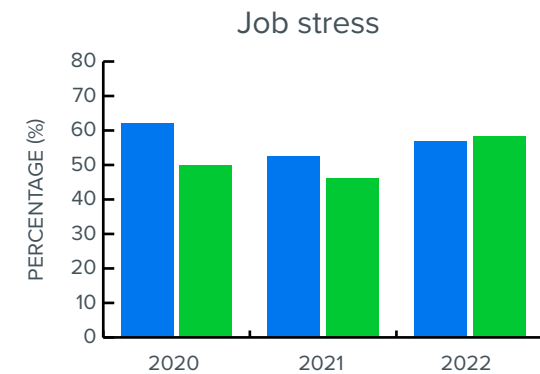
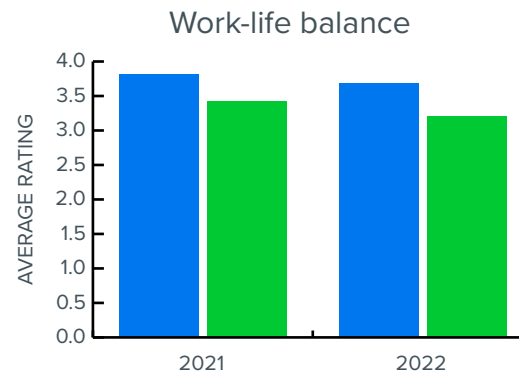
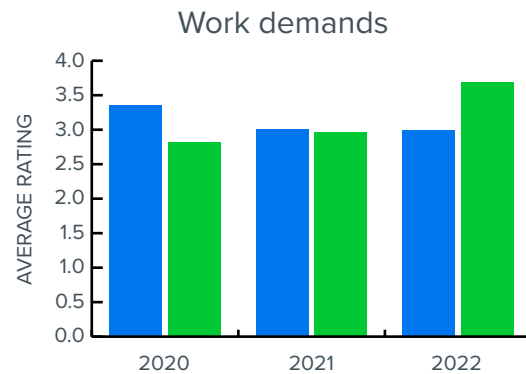
“ Sustainability is embedded in our company purpose and I feel backed, and a part of a team, who are committed to delivering sustainability outcomes across a range of areas

2

There are challenges that may impact our ability to effectively address sustainability in future:

- ➔ Risk of burn out of existing sustainability professionals
- ➔ Organisational capability required in future
- ➔ Individual competencies required in future roles
- ➔ Existing diversity challenges in the profession
- ➔ Successional pathway between academia and career

Although sustainability professionals continue to be better off than other New Zealand professionals, overall worker wellbeing has declined in the past year.

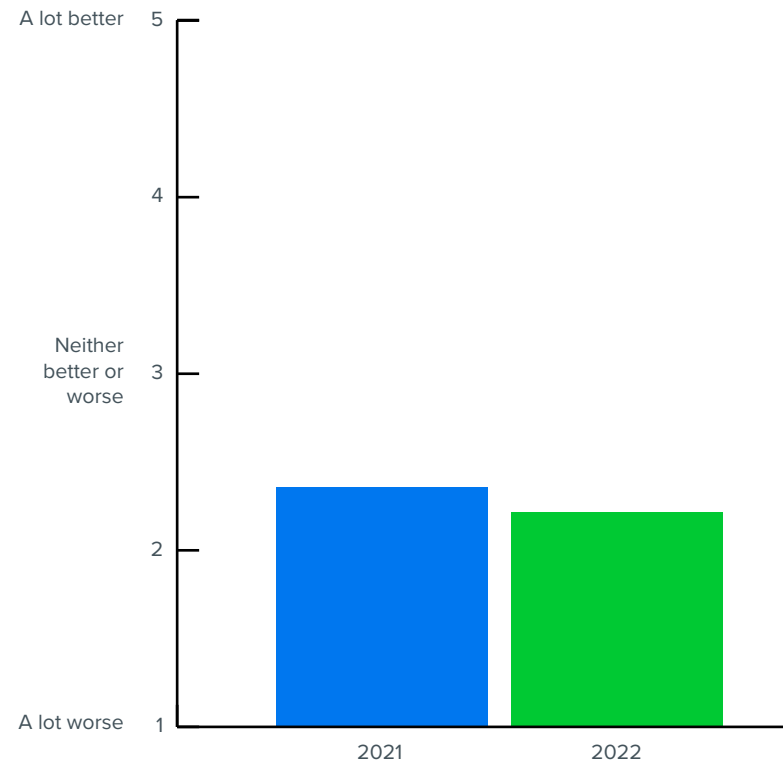


● NZ Sustainability Professionals ● NZ Professionals

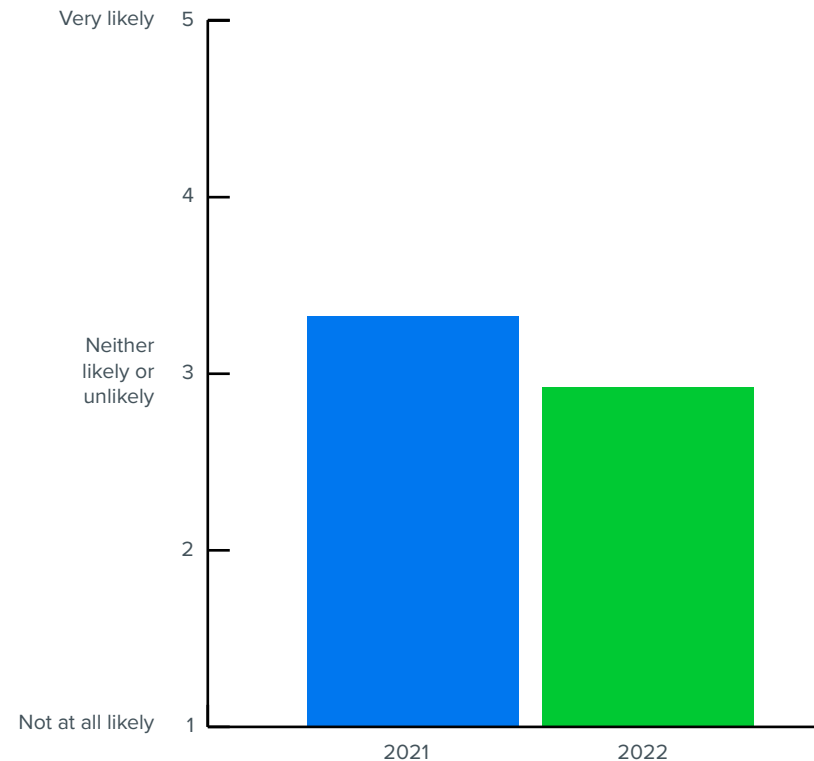
For work demands, work-life balance, job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and cynicism: 1 = Low level and 5 = High level in these categories, with 3 as the mid point.
For job stress: 0% = No job stress, 100% = High job stress.

Sustainability professionals continue to be concerned that humanity won't overcome current global sustainability challenges.

Thinking about the world, do you believe the environmental situation is getting better or worse?



How likely, if at all, do you think it is that humanity will find a way to overcome our current social, environmental and economic challenges?



Question: Thinking about the world, do you believe the environmental situation is getting better or worse? 1 = A lot worse, 5 = A lot better.

Question: How likely, if at all, do you think it is that humanity will find a way to overcome our current social, environmental and economic challenges? 1 = Not at all likely, 5 = Very likely.

While addressing climate change remains a top priority for organisations now and in the future, much more effort will be required to address iwi engagement, inequality and poverty, and biodiversity in the future.

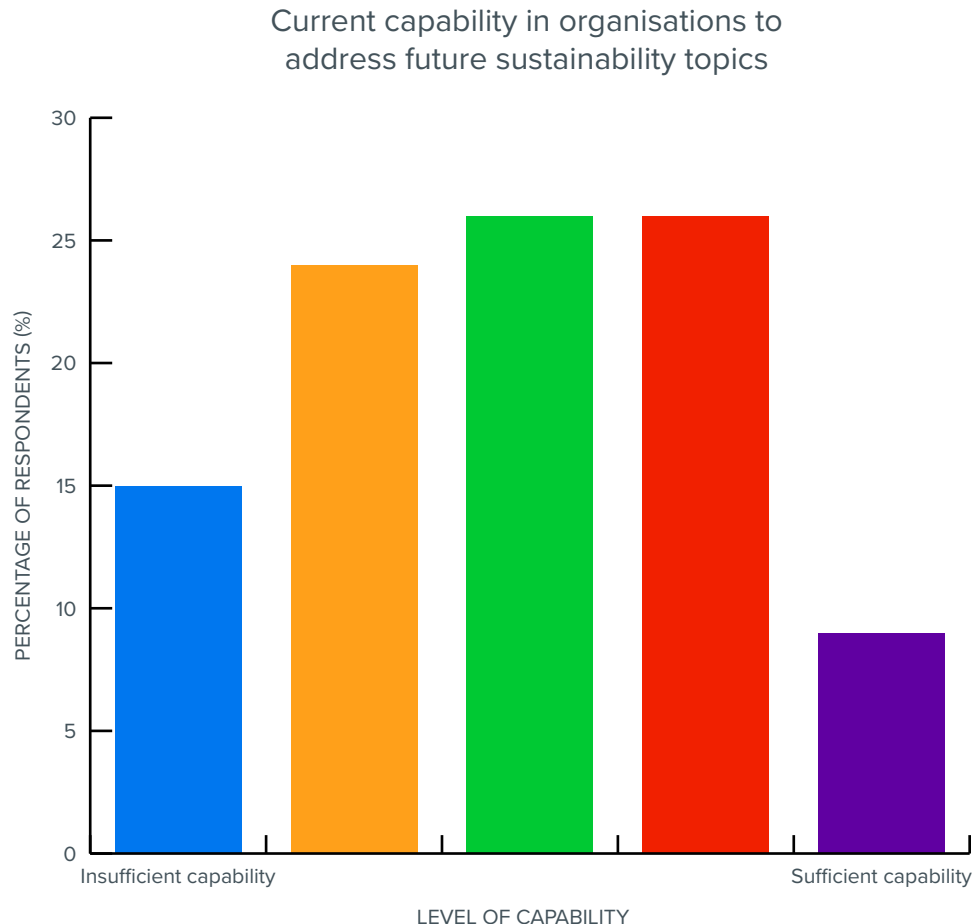
Priority sustainability topics now and in the future



Question: What are the priority topics addressed in your organisation's current sustainability programme/activities? (Select up to 10 topics)

Question: What are the priority topics your organisation should focus on into the future? (Select up to 10 topics)

91% think there is currently not enough capability in their organisations to address future sustainability topics.

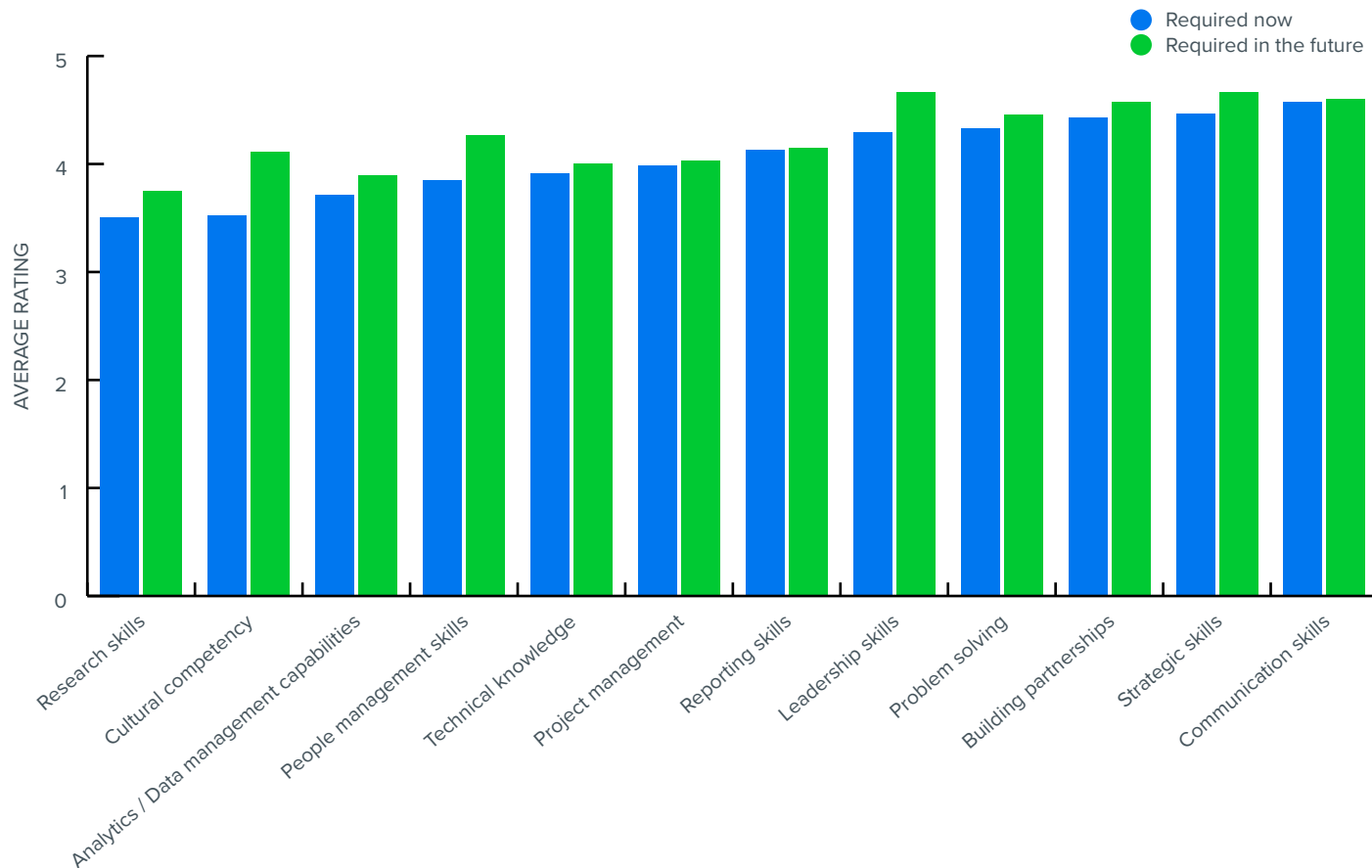


“ I believe we currently don't have the skills or training in New Zealand to develop people who can deliver to the urgency & scale of change needed in the key areas we work in – climate, circular economy or regenerating nature.

Question: Is there sufficient capability in your organisation now to address these topics in the future? 1 = Insufficient capability, 5 = Sufficient capability.

Sustainability professionals will need to further develop in all role competencies, particularly leadership, people management, and cultural competency.

Competencies required of sustainability professionals now and in the future



Top 5 competencies needed now and in the future:

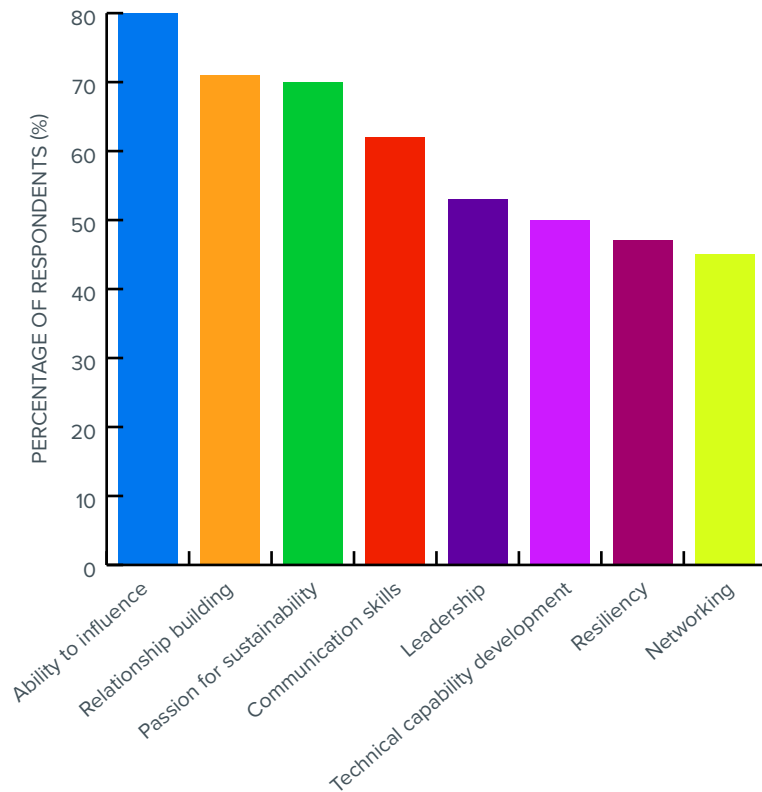
- Communication skills
- Strategic skills
- Building partnerships
- Problem solving
- Leadership skills

Question: What competencies are required in your role now? 1 = Low priority, 5 = High priority.

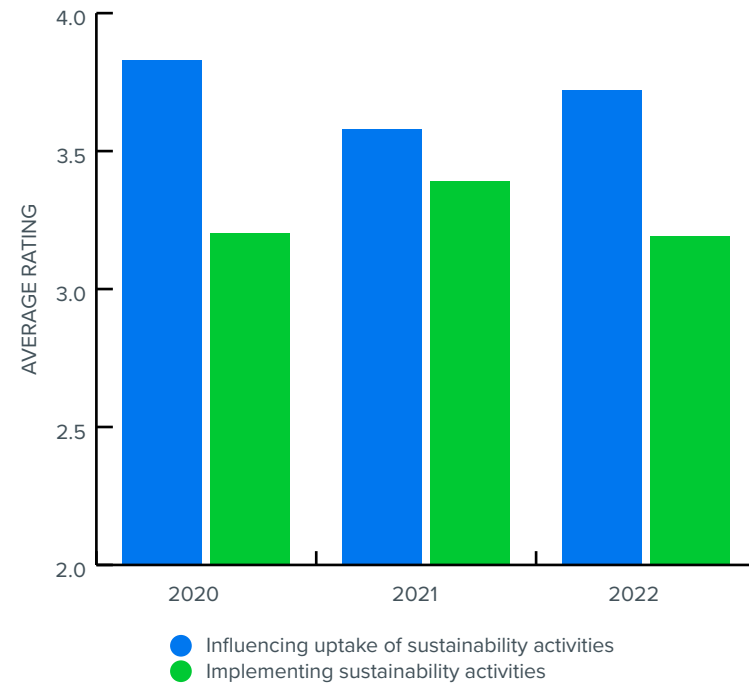
Question: What competencies do you think will be necessary in your in the future? 1 = Low priority, 5 = High priority.

The ability to influence, build relationships, and a passion for sustainability are key enablers for progression in a sustainability role.

Enablers to progression in a sustainability role



Level of time sustainability professionals spend influencing vs implementing sustainability activities

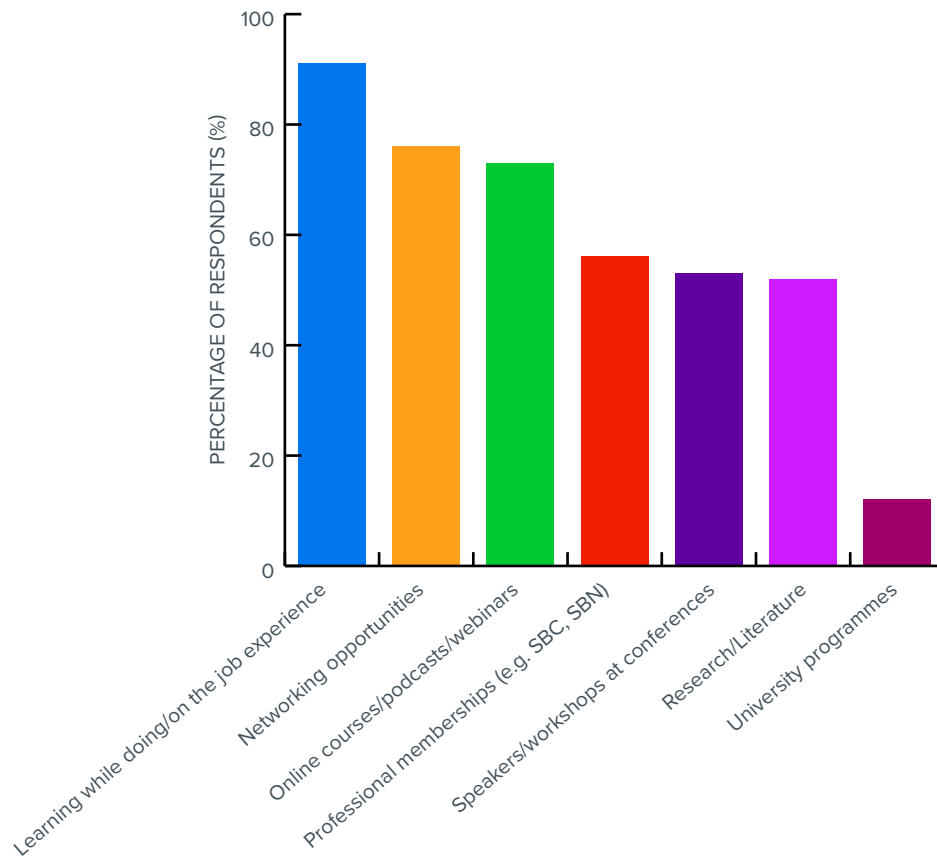


Question: In your opinion, what are the key enablers for your progression in a sustainability role?

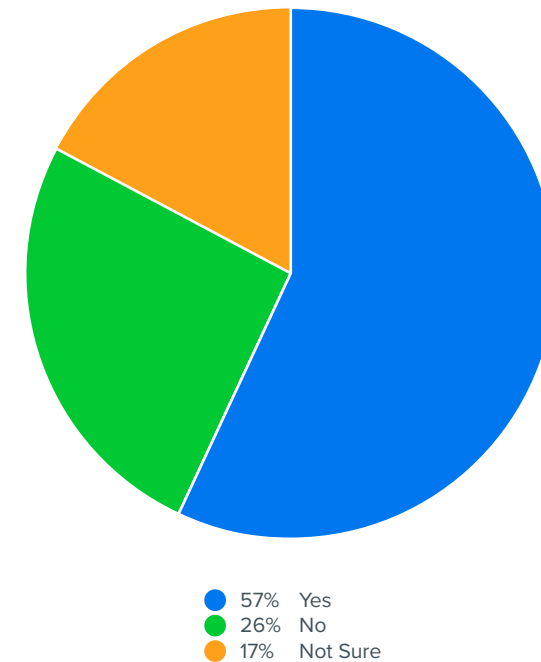
Question: How much of your time is spent influencing uptake compared with implementing sustainability activities? 1 = Not much time, 5 = Most of my time.

Most sustainability professionals develop their capability while on the job and through networking and online courses, however this may not be enough to support their role in the future.

How sustainability professionals develop their capability



Is this enough to support the competencies necessary in your role in the future?

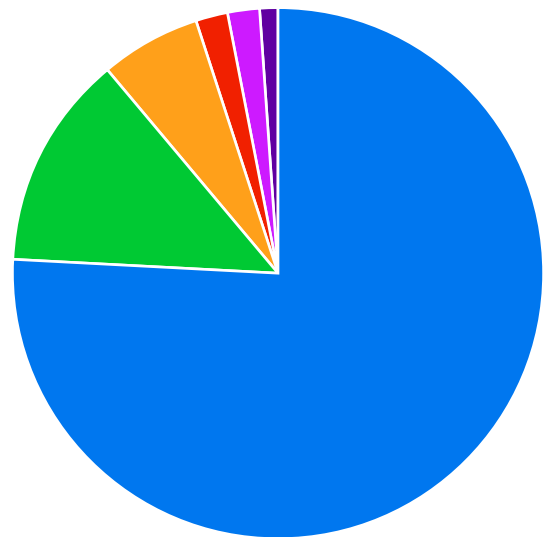


Question: How are you developing your capability within your role? Select all that apply.
Question: Is this enough to support the competencies necessary in your role in the future?

The New Zealand sustainability workforce is currently lacking in ethnic diversity.

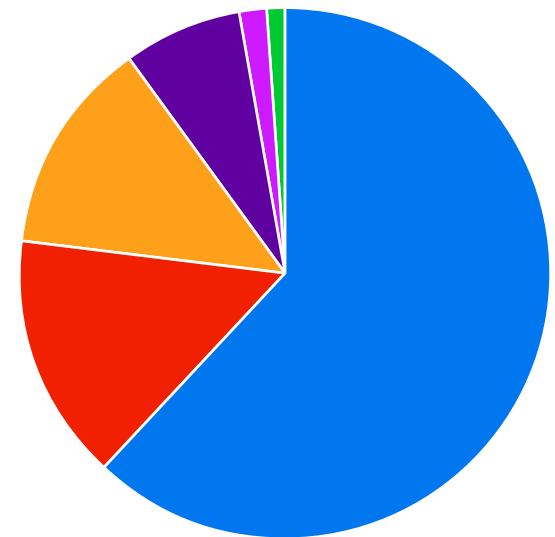
Māori, Asian and Pacific Peoples are under-represented in the sustainability profession

Ethnicity of sustainability professionals



- 76% New Zealand European
- 13% Other Ethnicity
- 6% Asian
- 2% Māori
- 2% MELAA (Middle Eastern/Latin American/African)
- 1% Pacific Peoples

Ethnicity of New Zealand population

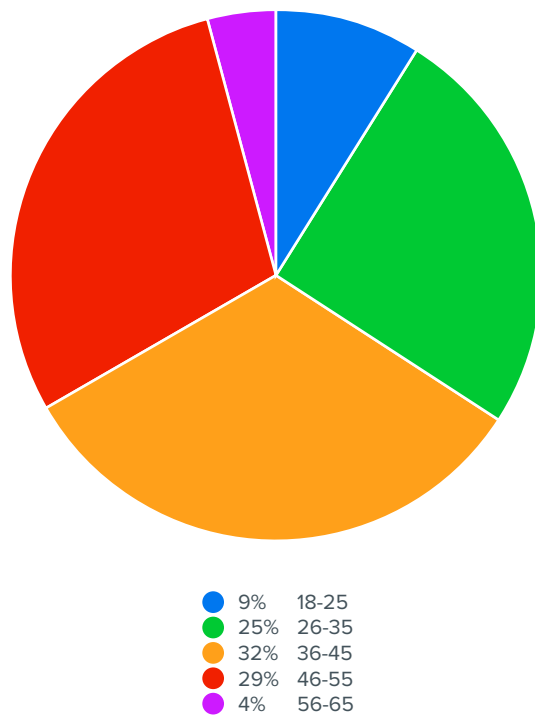


- 70% European
- 17% Māori
- 15% Asian
- 8% Pacific Peoples
- 2% MELAA (Middle Eastern/Latin American/African)
- 1% Other Ethnicity

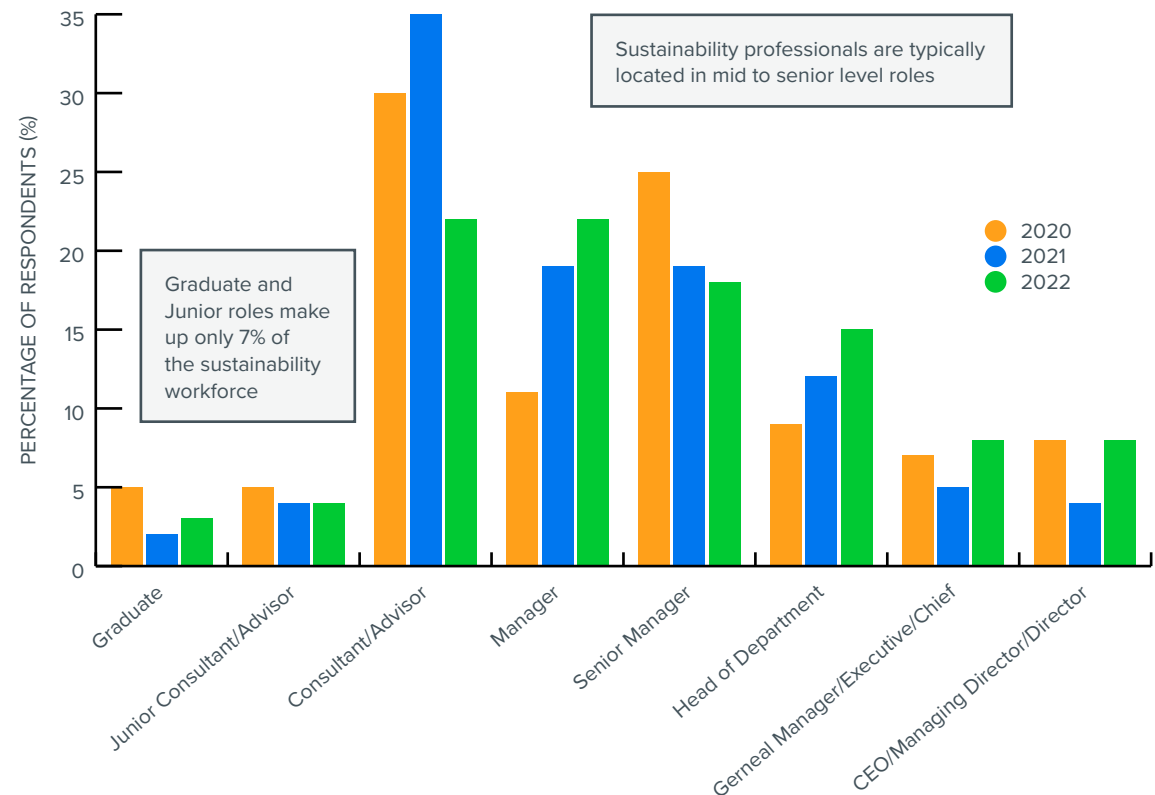
Question: Ethnicity.

Junior roles are under-represented in our sustainability workforce.

Age of sustainability professionals



Management level of sustainability professionals



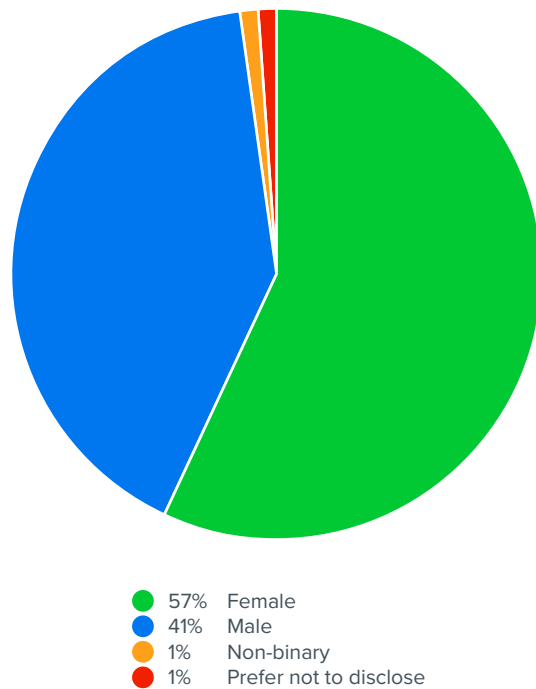
Only 27% of sustainability professionals can identify career opportunities at the graduate level.

Question: Age.

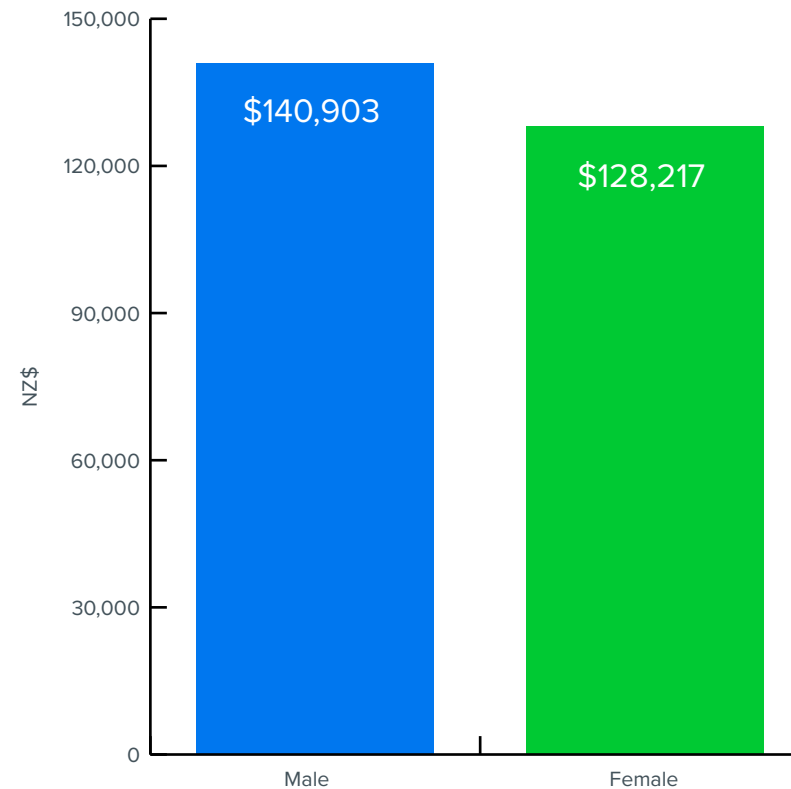
Question: What is the management level of your role?

Despite more women working in sustainability, they are paid 10% less than their male counterparts.

Gender of sustainability professionals



Average (mean) remuneration of full-time sustainability professionals



The average (median) gender pay gap in New Zealand is 9.1%.

Source: Ministry for Women

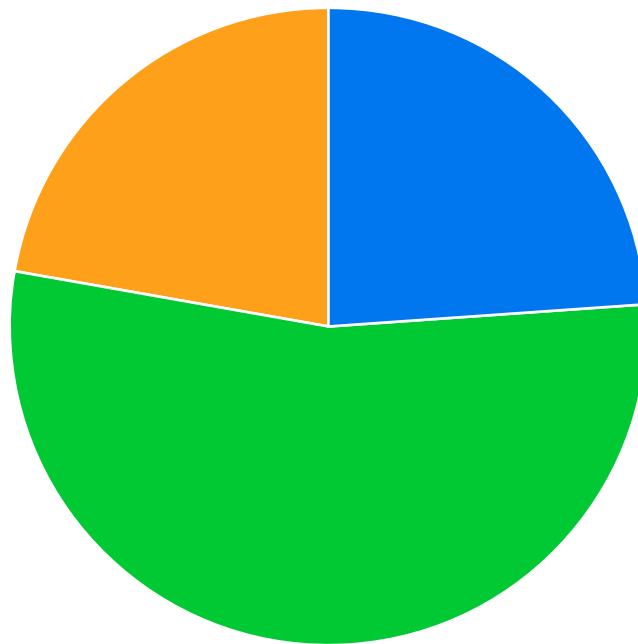
Question: Gender.

Question: What is the capacity of your role?

Question: What is the total remuneration band for your role?

Many sustainability professionals cannot identify a clear promotion pathway into another role in their organisation.

Is there a clear promotion pathway from sustainability into another role in your organisation?



76% of sustainability professionals cannot identify a clear promotion pathway

● 24% Yes
● 54% No
● 22% Not sure

Question: Is there a clear promotion pathway from sustainability into another role in your organisation?
'N/A – Sustainability is the main purpose of my organisation' was removed.

3

Practical ways to address these challenges and continue to grow the sustainability profession

- Educational institutions could refine how sustainability is shaped into their offering
- Organisations could increase their engagement with formal learning and education
- Organisations should continue to embed sustainability within the business
- Organisations should seek to integrate te ao Māori principles into sustainability
- Recruiters and organisations could further incorporate diversity and inclusion in recruitment processes
- Students can take more purposeful action on their academic pathway



Educational institutions could refine how sustainability is shaped into their offering

Potential actions:

- **Work with professional institutions to build sustainability into qualifications/faculties.** The research shows that all industries and all sectors employ sustainability professionals and that 96% of sustainability professionals hold a tertiary degree. Therefore, integrating sustainability papers or an ESG lens into tertiary courses generally will help to increase the collective sustainability capability across all disciplines. Professional institutions such as accountancy and engineering associations need to take a lead on promoting sustainability courses in university degrees.
- **Work with sustainability organisations to develop technical qualifications, micro credentials, or short courses for specialist skill development.** Sustainability organisations need to collaborate with each other and educational institutions to develop professional and executive short courses taught by industry experts, for example in: carbon accounting and assurance, climate risk assessment, international sustainability standards, te ao Māori (Māori world view), mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi). The research indicates that organisations and their sustainability professionals will require a greater level of capability in future, and that on-the-job capability development may not be enough. Technical or specialist qualifications may support organisations seeking to formally upskill their sustainability professionals on a particular area, which in turn will support professional and organisational capability development. Developing technical qualifications may also grow pathways for students wishing to pursue a career in sustainability consulting, with our research showing that consultants are engaged by organisations for technical support.
- **Build soft skills into sustainability degrees.** Over the past three years the research has consistently shown that sustainability professionals are leaders and influencers. They have strong skills in people management, relationship building, and problem solving. Building these skills into tertiary qualifications in sustainability will enhance the readiness and capability of students seeking a sustainability professional role.



Organisations could increase their engagement with formal learning and education

Potential actions:

- **Consider more deliberate sustainability capability development for employees.** In order to continue to embed sustainability in organisations, improve future capability and sustainability governance, consideration could be given to more formal upskilling for different roles. Organisations could start by reviewing the need within different roles and then evaluating the formal learning options to meet these needs, including micro credentials, relevant industry courses, or more comprehensive qualifications. Reviewing sustainability capability needs to be a continuous process, to keep pace with the organisational expertise and urgency required to address evolving sustainability challenges.
- **Grow the pipeline of junior candidates with sustainability capability.** Those organisations with graduate programmes could consider overlaying a sustainability lens to their candidate selection, or indeed, boosting their capacity by selecting sustainability professionals into the programme. This will also help to bridge the gap between university and careers in sustainability, improve succession pathways into more senior sustainability roles, and help build capacity for sustainability within the organisation.



Organisations should continue to embed sustainability within the business

Potential actions:

- **Ensure there is a clear governance structure** in place to address material sustainability issues. Define who has accountability for sustainability outcomes at a board, executive and line manager level.

Structuring board oversight of sustainability

- There is “no one size fits all” solution to structuring sustainability oversight at a board level. However, four main approaches are:
 - A dedicated committee for sustainability issues
 - Sustainability integrated into existing committee charters
 - Sustainability as the responsibility of the entire board
 - Sustainability Advisory Panel
- A growing number of organisations have established independent advisory panels – formal groups of sustainability experts to advise the CEO and executive management on critical sustainability issues.
- A sustainability-competent Board:
 - Integrates knowledge of material sustainability issues into board nomination processes to recruit directors.
 - Educates all directors on material sustainability issues to support informed oversight and informed strategic decision-making.
 - Engages regularly with external stakeholders and experts on relevant sustainability issues. Consider embedding sustainability into leadership and development programmes to ensure your organisation has core competencies and capabilities on sustainability at a board, executive and line manager level.
- **Ensure there is a clear sustainability strategy for the organisation** which will enable the integration of sustainability responsibilities into more functions and other roles within the business. ‘Responsibility’ can range from participating in a sustainability committee to more formalised KPIs or accountability for specific activities and/or building sustainability accountabilities into role descriptions. This may assist in continuing to improve sustainability governance, capability and capacity building across the organisation. It may also reduce pressure on those in dedicated sustainability professional roles, helping to reduce the chance of burnout, and enhance the sense of team connection and support for those in dedicated sustainability roles.
- **Engage everyone in the business.** To support broad organisational engagement with sustainability, some organisations have found it useful to have sustainability 101 programmes which provide an overview of the basics of sustainability and connect people’s hearts and minds with the sustainability journey.

Organisations should seek to integrate te ao Māori principles into sustainability

Engagement with indigenous populations is critical because climate change significantly threatens indigenous people's livelihoods and traditional knowledge (UN DESA, 2021). There is also much to learn from indigenous populations as indigenous knowledge has a focus on interconnectedness with nature and therefore a sense reciprocity and caretaking (Mazzocchi, 2020).

There is much sustainability can learn and adopt from te ao Māori. Sustainability is not simply restoration of the land but restoration between land and people. This can be seen clearly within Te Mauri Hikahika o te Taiao, Aotearoa's biodiversity strategy, which showcases the uniqueness of Aotearoa's nature and culture.

Authentically engaging with te ao Māori will help to grow a more diverse and inclusive sustainability workforce, to appreciate indigenous wisdom, the systemic connection between people and nature and how this can improve the way in which sustainability is addressed and integrated into business.

Potential actions:

- **Grow cultural competence** - engage with agencies such as Maurea Consulting (Te Kaa) or Tūtira Mai, to develop an understanding of te ao Māori, determine how Māori culture is relevant to your organisational sustainability and improve your ability to engage with Māori.
- **Learn te reo Māori** - The insights and experiences gained through learning te reo Māori may enrich and deepen an understanding of te ao Māori (the Māori world) and the connection of organisational sustainability in this context. It will also grow cultural literacy within the organisation and a greater awareness of how language, culture, place and heritage play a part in shaping identity and in giving direction and meaning.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Social Inclusion, 2020. Challenges and Opportunities for Indigenous Peoples' Sustainability.
Mazzocchi, F, 2020. A deeper meaning from Sustainability: Insights from Indigenous knowledge.



Recruiters and organisations could integrate diversity and inclusion to recruitment processes

The research indicates the sustainability profession is under-represented across ethnicity, gender and in junior roles.

To grow a more diverse and inclusive sustainability workforce and improve the ability of sustainability professionals to address the same issues which are rising in importance within their organisations, both recruiters and organisations can play a part.

Potential actions:

- **Ensure your recruitment process firstly attracts a diverse candidate pool**, which you assess without bias, and then develop and retain within an inclusive workplace culture that fosters a sense of belonging and creates equal opportunities for all.
- **Update recruitment marketing materials**. Communicating your commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and progress can have a significant impact on your ability to attract more diverse candidates. Ensure your ESG reporting, website and careers pages effectively represent your workplace culture and the experience of working for you. Create clearly defined and unbiased tone of voice guidelines for those who write and publish position descriptions and job advertisements. Make sure the imagery used on recruitment marketing materials reflects a diverse workforce and promote the flexible working practices you offer.
- **Review your attraction strategies**. If the current channels you use to attract candidates are not delivering people with a diverse background, look at new channels or means of attracting under-represented demographic groups into your organisation. From recruitment agencies to social media, your own website, industry bodies, community groups, even word of mouth, there are various options to consider when looking to widen the diversity of your applicants.
- **Consider targets**. Diversity targets for executives, senior and line managers can have a positive impact on diverse candidate attraction and recruitment. Targets can ensure an attraction and selection process is purposefully inclusive by mitigating the impact of unconscious bias.
- **Consider changes to recruitment processes** such as blind recruitment, using a structured interview process and ensuring all hiring managers have completed unconscious bias training.



Students can take more purposeful action on their academic pathway

Potential actions:

For a pathway into becoming a Sustainability Manager within an organisation:

- Choose a degree that aligns with individual skills and interest, it doesn't necessarily have to be a dedicated sustainability degree. The research indicates that sustainability professionals are in all industries, sectors and all parts of a business. Whether the core discipline is in architecture, engineering, finance, law, science, arts, politics or otherwise – sustainability can and is part of all these professions.
- Select additional papers/programmes that build general sustainability knowledge relevant to the core discipline/degree.
- For those embarking on a dedicated sustainability degree – build in papers and extra curricular training that will grow skills in influencing, leading, strategy, and partnership brokering. These are vital to the role of the sustainability professional.
- Actively seek job experience/practical component in the final year of the course/degree. This will provide a greater level of opportunity to progress into a sustainability role, with on-the-job experience a key part of development in these roles.
- Look out for graduate programmes within organisations that have a strong focus on sustainability. These organisations may be embedding sustainability across different roles, providing a greater potential opportunity to step from a graduate role into a sustainability-focused role.

For a pathway into Sustainability Consulting:

- Find degrees, micro-credentials or technical training in areas of interest, such as: Climate Change Risk Assessment; Carbon Accounting, Audit and Assurance; Circular Economy; Life Cycle Assessment; International reporting standards and benchmarks; Certifications; te ao Māori (Māori world view); mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge); Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi); Community Investment; Ethical procurement. Sustainability consultants provide organisations with technical expertise, so specific qualifications may assist in progressing towards a career in this industry.





4

**The role of the
sustainability
professional**

Sustainability professionals work in various industries and regions across New Zealand.

Industries employing sustainability professionals

| Industry | Proportion of respondents | | Change |
|--|---------------------------|------|--------|
| | 2021 | 2022 | |
| Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services | 12% | 11% | ↓ |
| Management Consulting | 11% | 11% | — |
| Other | 19% | 10% | ↓ |
| Manufacturing | 6% | 8% | ↑ |
| Financial and Insurance Services | 10% | 8% | ↓ |
| Public Administration and Safety | 9% | 8% | ↓ |
| Construction | 4% | 7% | ↑ |
| Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing | 4% | 5% | ↑ |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 2% | 5% | ↑ |
| Education and Training | 11% | 4% | ↓ |
| Engineering | 2% | 4% | ↑ |
| Transport, Postal and Warehousing | 4% | 4% | — |
| Information Media and Telecommunications | 1% | 4% | ↑ |
| Retail Trade and Accommodation | 5% | 4% | ↓ |
| Scientific Research | 0% | 3% | ↑ |
| Architecture and Design | 0% | 1% | ↑ |
| Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services | 0% | 1% | ↑ |
| Administrative and Support Services | N/A | 3% | ↑ |

Regions employing sustainability professionals

| Region | Proportion of respondents | | | Change |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------|------|--------|
| | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | |
| Auckland | 64% | 58% | 59% | ↑ |
| Wellington | 18% | 23% | 10% | ↓ |
| Canterbury | 7% | 9% | 11% | ↑ |
| Bay of Plenty | 5% | 3% | 6% | ↑ |
| Waikato | 2% | 2% | 3% | ↑ |
| Marlborough | 2% | 0% | 1% | ↑ |
| Otago | 1% | 1% | 1% | — |
| Taranaki | 1% | 3% | 1% | ↓ |
| Nelson | 0% | 0% | 2% | ↑ |
| Hawke's Bay | 0% | 0% | 1% | ↑ |
| Manawatu-Wanganui | 0% | 1% | 1% | — |
| Northland | 0% | 0% | 1% | ↑ |
| Southland | 0% | 0% | 1% | ↑ |
| Tasman | 0% | 1% | 1% | — |
| West Coast | 0% | 0% | 1% | ↑ |

↑ Increase in respondents

↓ Decrease in respondents

— Unchanged

Question: Which industry is your role in?

Question: Which location in NZ are you based in?

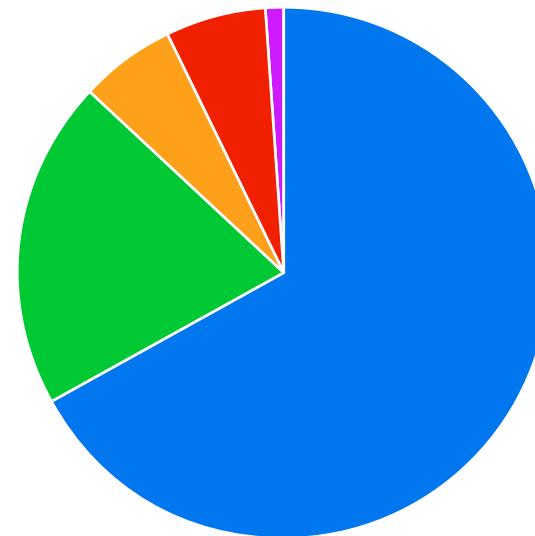
Sustainability professionals are generally found in larger organisations and in the private sector.

Size of organisations employing sustainability professionals



- 14% 1-9 employees
- 0% 10-19 employees
- 11% 20-49 employees
- 11% 50-249 employees
- 23% 250-1000 employees
- 41% 1000+ employees

Types of organisations employing sustainability professionals

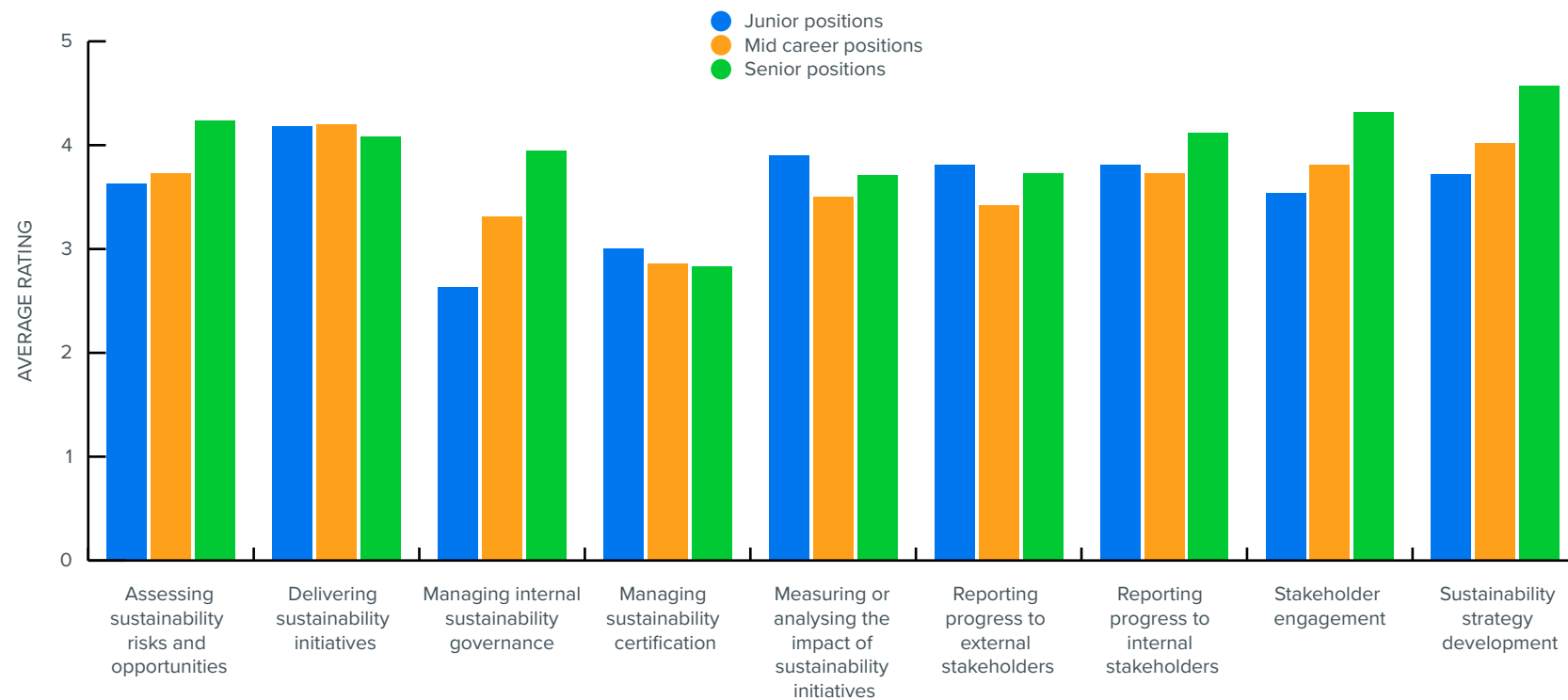


- 67% Private sector
- 20% Public sector
- 6% Non-Governmental organisation
- 6% Not-for-Profit
- 1% Charity

Question: What is the size of your organisation?
Question: What is your organisational type?

Sustainability professionals manage a wide range of activities in their organisations, with seniors focused on strategy and juniors on delivery.

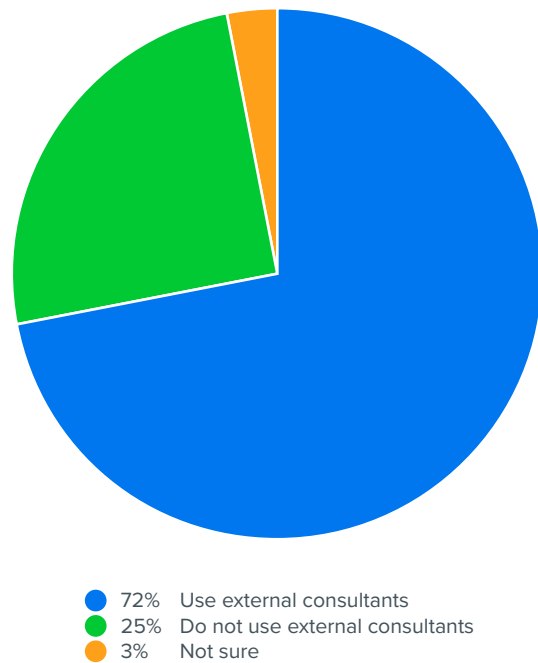
Activities managed or included in sustainability roles



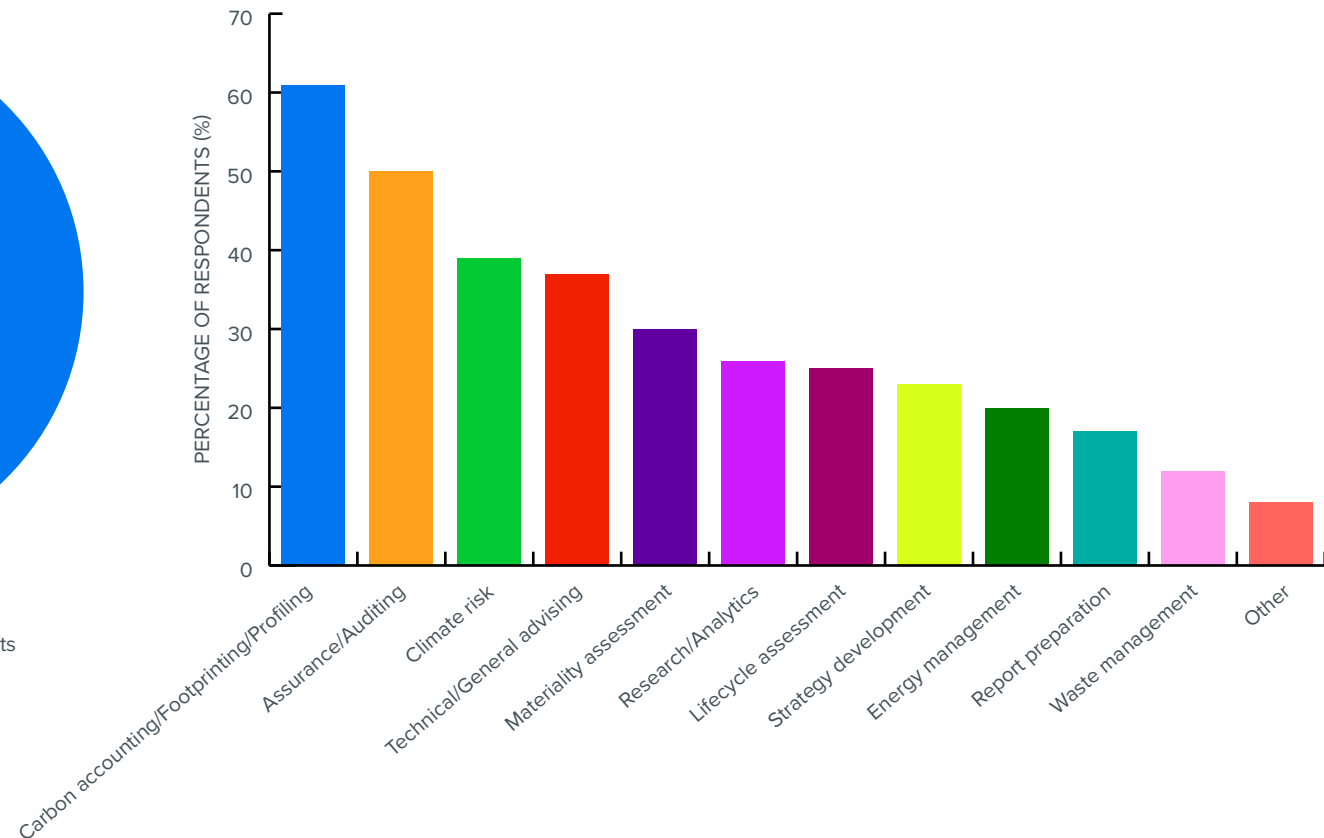
Question: Which of the following activities are managed or included in your role? 1 = Low priority, 5 = High priority.

Organisations use a combination of in-house and external sustainability professionals to support their sustainability agendas.

Organisational use of external consultants



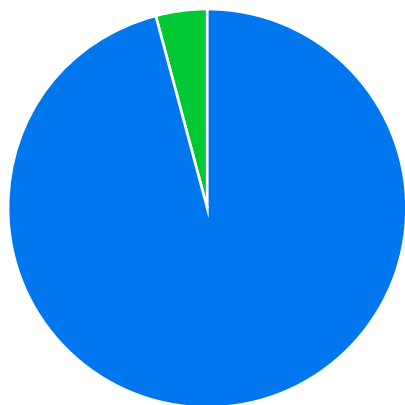
Services provided by external consultants



Question: Does your organisation use external consultants to support its sustainability activities?
Question: If yes, what activities are the external consultants involved in? Select all that apply.

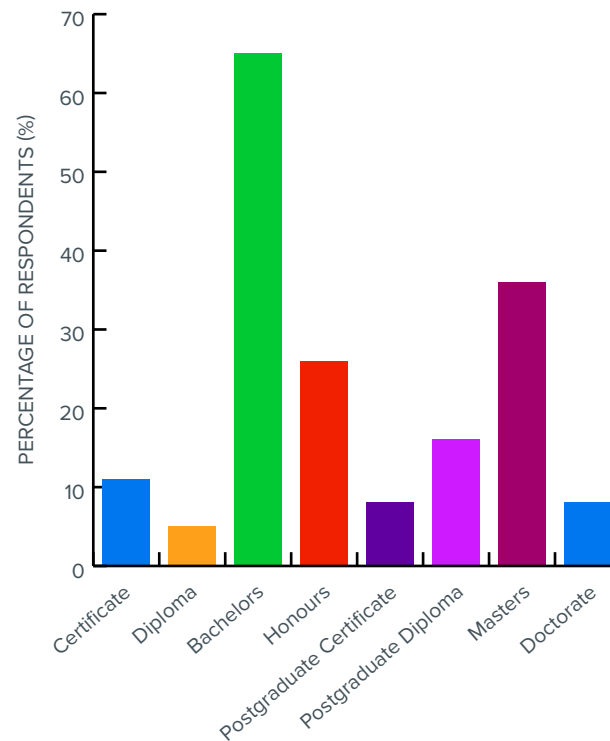
Sustainability professionals are highly educated, typically having a tertiary qualification at the degree level or higher in science or business.

Level of education

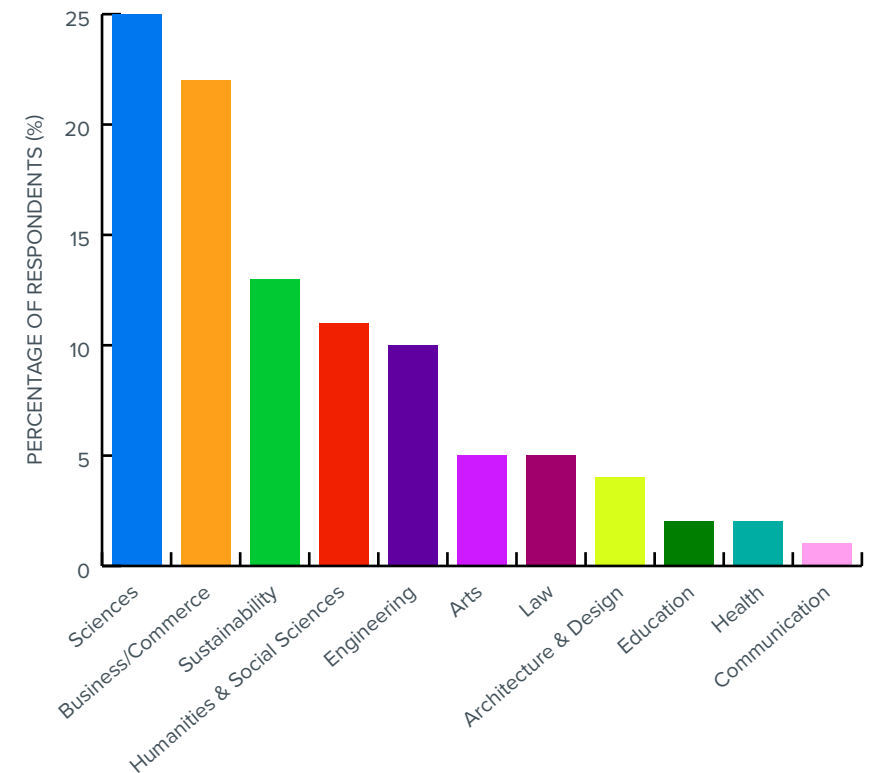


● 96% Tertiary qualification
● 4% No tertiary qualification

Qualification/s



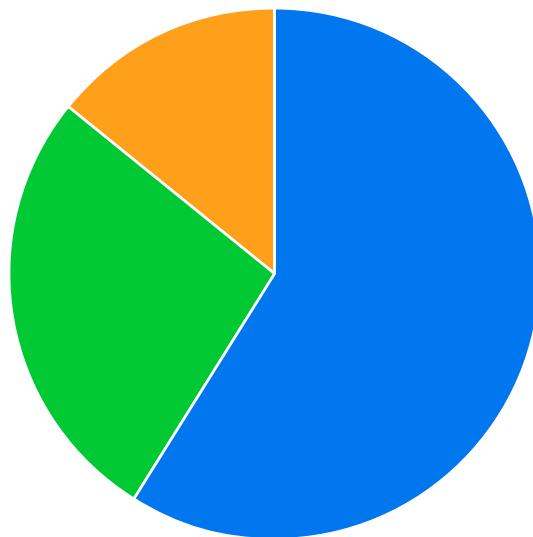
Field/s of study



Question: Do you hold a tertiary degree/s?
Question: Yes, what type/s? Select all that apply.
Question: If yes, in which field of study? Select all that apply.

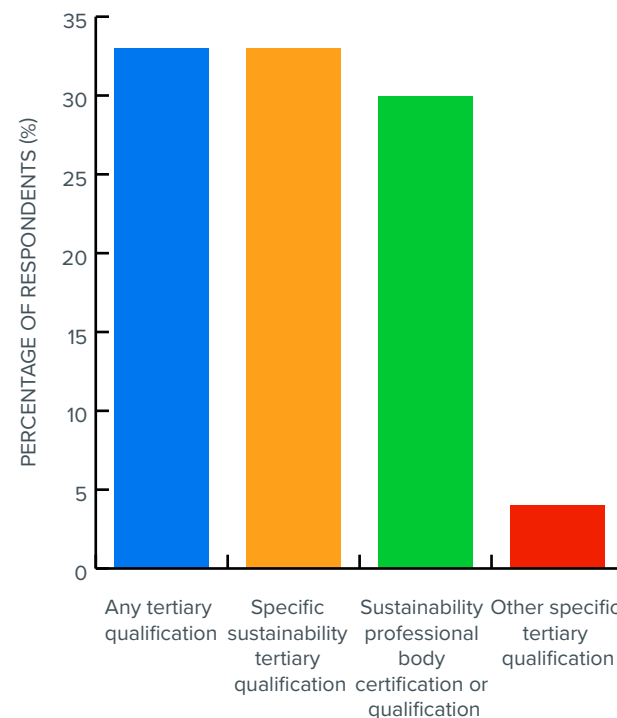
Over half of sustainability professionals believe a qualification is necessary to support the role.

Do you think a qualification is necessary to support the role of the sustainability professional?



- 59% Tertiary qualification is required
- 27% Tertiary qualification is not required
- 14% Not sure

Required qualification to support the role of a sustainability professional



“ A qualification brings a level of research understanding and mana that can be helpful when working with senior leaders and decision makers

“ Sustainability cuts across all disciplines, so while there is some specialist knowledge involved, it is more about coordinating/bringing everyone together around this purpose

“ Sustainability should be embedded in all qualifications

Question: Do you think a qualification is necessary to support the role of the sustainability professional?
Question: If yes, what qualification would this be? Select all that apply.

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Contributing organisations



OXYGEN CONSULTING

Oxygen Consulting provides organisations with technical advice and guidance on sustainability practices, assisting clients to maximise their long-term business performance by strengthening social, environmental and economic outcomes.

Its services support all aspects of the sustainability journey, including: assessing material risks and opportunities; carbon management and climate disclosure; developing a sustainability strategy and key performance metrics; building sustainability capability and capacity; project management; research and insights, and; reporting and communications.

Oxygen Consulting is a member for the Sustainable Business Council, the Sustainable Business Network, and the Climate Leaders Coalition.

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AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (AUT) SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH

The sustainability team at AUT researches at the intersection of engagement, resilience and sustainability action and regularly works with business and NGO's to promote employee engagement in sustainability. Its student research also gives it a strong voice to youth engagement in sustainability. AUT scored high in the Times Social Impact awards and sustainability teaching is integrated throughout all degrees in the Business School. At present the AUT Business School runs 7 sustainability courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

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SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL (SBC)

The Sustainable Business Council (SBC) is a CEO-led membership organisation with over 100 businesses from all sectors, ambitious for a sustainable New Zealand. Members represent more than \$111 billion of collective turnover, 34% of GDP, and nearly 179,136 full-time jobs. The network gives members unparalleled influence and the ability to take large-scale collective action and is aligned with the Climate Leaders Coalition. SBC is part of the BusinessNZ network and is the New Zealand Global Network Partner to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

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SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS NETWORK (SBN)

The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) is the largest sustainable business organisation in New Zealand, with a network of 550+ businesses, social enterprises and councils. SBN is transforming NZ business to meet the world's sustainability challenges, with world-class resources, professional training and deeper connections. SBN provides Kiwi businesses with the tools and connections to regenerate nature, act on climate and design out waste.

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