



A SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS FROM THE 2025 EMPLOYMENT MONITOR

Māori kaimahi and Māori employers in Aotearoa

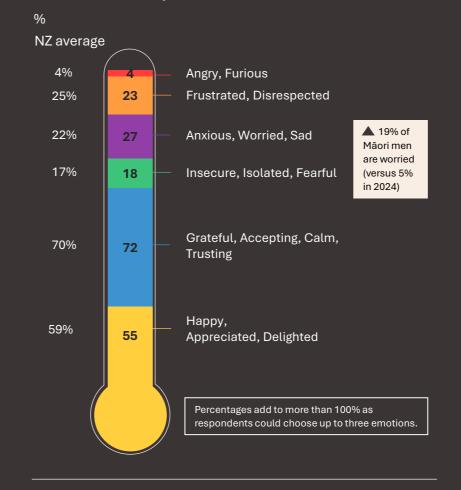
MBIE's employment monitor delivers a comprehensive view of New Zealand workers' and employers' perceptions, experiences and pressures in the employment market. This infographic focuses on Māori kaimahi (workers) and Māori employers. Verian surveyed 465 kaimahi and 96 Māori employers in February and March 2025. Comparisons are made with a baseline 2024 survey.



Most Māori kaimahi remain satisfied with their employment situation.



Māori kaimahi express emotions about their employment in line with the average NZ worker, but more Māori men are worried about their job than in 2024.



And since 2024, Māori women feel more reliant on their job for financial security.

% of Māori women who agree 'It's essential I stay in this job so I can financially support myself and my family'



High trust in employers is down among Māori kaimahi.



Around half (52%) of Māori kaimahi express concerns about their employment situation

Main themes



28% Pay concerns

e.g. equity issues, unpaid overtime or public holiday work, broken promises



27% Workplace culture & safety issues



25% Hours

e.g. longer hours than agreed, unpaid overtime.

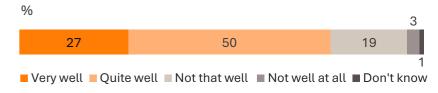


16% Harassment, discrimination

e.g. verbal abuse, bullying and harassment, racism, other discrimination.

Māori kaimahi self-rated and tested knowledge levels are consistent with 2024.

Māori kaimahi feel they understand their employment rights...





On average, Māori kaimahi incorrectly understand (or are unsure about) three of 14 employment rights tested.

Top 4 sources of useful information on employment rights

35%	24%	22%	15%
Online	Employer/	Personal	Union
searches	workplace	contacts	

Since 2024, Māori kaimahi now place more importance on speaking up in an exploitative situation but it remains a difficult thing to do for many



Māori kaimahi told us why they would be scared to speak up...



"Because i need my job and if I complained about something my immediate coordinator would make my job more hell than she does now."

"Because there is a huge power imbalance in the employment relationship."

"It would feel embarrassing."

"In the past I have never had any success when dealing with HR and I guess I just feel like Employment NZ would be the same."

Community and government channels are trusted sources for Māori kaimahi.

Government sources (ENZ website, newsletters, email)

Community support (CAB, law centres)

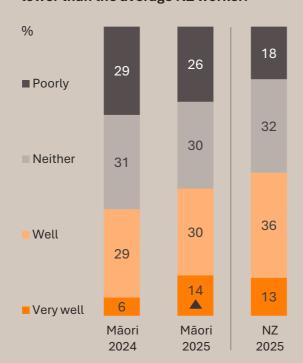
25% Union

16% Mainstream media

14% Ethnic community channels

9% Social media

Māori kaimahi perceptions of NZ government agencies' support of workers has improved, but remains lower than the average NZ worker.



Around four in ten (39%) Māori kaimahi under 40 remain in higher risk segments. Since 2024, Māori aged under 40 have seen a notable shift, with a smaller Naïve but unexploited group mirroring trends among non-Māori workers.



More knowledge of employee rights



Māori aged under 40

Capable

Lower risk of exploitation

- Very good understanding of employment rights
- High satisfaction/few concerns
- High levels of trust in employer
- More likely to speak up in exploitative situations
- Most know how to find help

Knowledgeable but trapped

- Good understanding of employment rights, but lack confidence
- Many dissatsified with high levels of frustration and anxiety
- They feel trapped as they're reliant on their job and worry about the consequences from raising concerns
- High incidence of employment concerns (low pay, poor workplace culture, long hours or harassment etc.)
- Lack trust in employers and the system.

Naïve, but unexploited

- Poor understanding of employment rights, partly because they are less interested in this
- Satisfied with their employment, trust their employer
- Less reliant on their job
- Some employment concerns but not prevalent
- An element of pessimism (average levels of trust in government agencies to support workers, on the fence about speaking up about issues etc.).

Disheartened

- Poor understanding of employment rights
- Dissatisfied with their employment, often frustrated
- Less likely to have employment contracts
- Wide ranging employment concerns (e.g. underpayment, long hours, discrimination, poor workplace culture)
- Low levels of trust (in their employer, Employment NZ and government agencies' support)
- They're less likely to speak up fear consequences and don't know where to get help



Less knowledge of employee rights



...of employers in NZ are **Māori businesses**.

A further

7%

...of NZ employers **aspire** to be **Māori value based** in the future.

*Estimate considers impact of sampling sources (see full report).

Te ao Māori influences nearly two thirds* of Māori employers.



57%

agree working for a Māori business influences how they approach their obligations as an employer.



56%

agree working for a Māori business influences how they think about and approach the way they support the rights of their employees.

*59% of Māori businesses agreed to at least one of these two statements.



"I am more open to providing job opportunities to unemployed Māori."

"Tangi, karakia, whānau, te reo Māori, being about the people."

"Māori values such as manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and mana influence my approach."

"Using Māori concepts like manaakitanga, allows both the employer and employee to build trust and feel supported."

"It influences how we interact and share our values with our employees – valuing whānau, mokopuna, wellbeing and whanaungatanga."

"We are more whānau focused and give entitlements above the contract, e.g. tangihanga."



One in four Māori employers belong to an ethnic association or community group.

Consistent with the NZ benchmark, around one in five Māori employers show the potential for worker exploitation due to weak attitudes or conflicting business pressures.

The larger size of the Virtuous and Compliant segment among Māori employers (28% vs 19% of all NZ employers) is attributed to their profile, which includes a somewhat bigger proportion of larger employers and significantly higher self-assessed knowledge of employment obligations.

All employers 19

Māori employers 28

Strong (consistent) legal compliance

All employers 6

Māori employers 4

Virtuous and compliant

- Good understanding of employment rules and regulations and sound business reasons to comply
- Strong moral obligation to workers
- Tend to be larger businesses (20+ workers)
- More likely to employ migrants.

Conflicted

- About average understanding of employment rules and regulations
- Struggle to keep up with the employment law and don't always feel the regulations are fit-for-purpose
- Experience strong business pressures
- Can find it difficult to find workers
- Tend to be smaller businesses.

Doing right by workers

Strong moral obligation

- Fairly average understanding of employment rules and regulations
- Tend to be smaller businesses
- Not strongly motivated by compliance, but generally do so.
- Least likely to employ migrants.

Potential exploiters

- **Poor knowledge** of employment rules and regulations
- Strong business pressures, meaning they are likely to bend or ignore employment law in order to keep their business running. Some feel exploitation is a necessary part of running a business in their industry
- Weak moral obligation towards workers and even some antagonism towards them
- Predominantly small businesses.

All employers 60

Māori employers 5

Weak (contextual) legal compliance

All employers 16

Māori employers 1

