



Culture Survey Report

Manatū Taonga

Ministry for Culture and Heritage
Organisational Report

July 2021



IN CONFIDENCE

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Executive summary & thematic analysis

This section provides an overview of the key themes of your culture survey, written by our team of organisational psychologists. We compare your results with those of similar organisations, highlight key areas where your organisation is doing well, note potential areas for improvement, and recommend potential actions based on strategies that have worked well elsewhere.

Overall impressions

The ten most frequent words used to describe the Ministry's culture were "friendly", "inclusive", "supportive", "caring", "flexible", "changing", "collaborative", "dedicated", "inconsistent", and "siloed". These words paint a broadly positive picture of how the Ministry is perceived, with some indications of room to further improve.

On average, reported levels of engagement, satisfaction, and perceived quality of organisational practices were very similar at the Ministry compared with other New Zealand organisations. Similarly, the rates at which people reported that they intended to stay at the Ministry for the near future, and would recommend the Ministry as an employer, were very similar to other organisations. This suggests that like most New Zealand organisations, the Ministry is perceived positively overall by most of its employees, but has areas where it could improve.

Notably, reported levels of engagement and satisfaction varied significantly across the Ministry (more so than is typically observed). People's comments also ranged from glowing (e.g. "It is a pleasure to work in my team with an exceptional manager and great colleagues") to very critical (e.g. "This is the worst place I have ever worked"). This suggests that there is the opportunity for different parts of the organisation to learn from one another and work co-operatively to lift people's engagement and satisfaction.

What your organisation is doing well

While people provided a broad range of opinions about the organisation, most people reported that the Ministry is doing well in the following key areas:

- › **Gaining commitment to the Ministry's purpose.** It is clear from the survey responses that your people are passionate about their work and believe that their work matters for New Zealanders (e.g. "My colleagues care about what they do, and want to achieve the best outcomes possible for the NZ public"). This commitment to their Ministry's purpose assists them to show enthusiasm and a sense of urgency, and persist in the face of work challenges.
- › **Treating people from all backgrounds fairly and inclusively.** This question received the highest ratings of any in the survey, and many people commented positively on this area (e.g. "Across the Ministry diversity seems to be valued and the Ministry generally feels like an inclusive place").
- › **Providing a physically safe and healthy work environment.** This question was also very highly rated, and received several positive comments (e.g. "Strong H&S component to induction. Regular H&S agenda items. Immediate action taken when issues arise").
- › **Providing flexible working options.** Many people commented on how much they appreciated the Ministry's policies on working from home and flexible working hours (e.g. "MCH has an exceptional flexible working culture and encourages work-life balance... MCH's approach to work-life balance has made my life as a working parent significantly less stressful"). The majority of people were satisfied with their overall work-life balance, although praise for this area was somewhat less consistent, with some people requesting greater resourcing for their areas (e.g. "Ensure teams are resourced properly to manage workload").
- › **Creating a supportive working environment in many parts of the Ministry.** Most people were satisfied with how well they were treated by their manager and work colleagues (e.g. "People are respectful and helpful. The culture is good"). Most people also felt that the Ministry's senior leaders and managers encourage collaboration and create a positive working environment (e.g. "I feel it is encouraged to work with multiple staff" and "I feel like senior leaders and managers generally foster a positive and supportive working environment by being accessible, approachable and genuinely caring about people"). However, this appreciation for the organisation's working environment was not universal, as noted below.

- › **Providing people-focused leadership in many parts of the Ministry.** Most people at the Ministry believe that senior leaders and managers care about staff as people. Many people were particularly positive about how well they were treated by their immediate manager (e.g. “My manager has created a healthy work environment that regularly celebrates who we are as individuals and our capability in what we can produce in our work”). There were also several positive comments about the Chief Executive and other members of the leadership team (e.g. “I see senior managers make time for personal conversations and show interest in people's work as well as personal lives, and genuine empathy for staff that are not direct reports to them. This occurs even at CE level, which I suspect is rare for departments”).
- › **Encouraging people to extend their cultural capability.** Most people reported that the Ministry encourages them to extend their knowledge and skills in te reo Māori, tikanga and the treaty of Waitangi. However, they also identified that they would appreciate greater support with achieving this, as noted below.

Potential areas for improvement

While people made diverse suggestions for what the Ministry could do differently, the most frequent and/or significant areas highlighted for improvement were:

- › **Low performance is not consistently addressed effectively.** Fewer than a quarter of respondents believe that the Ministry does well in this area, and many people wrote comments suggesting that improvements could be made (e.g. “I have noticed some low performing team members don't seem to be held to the same standard as others. I think there should be some consequences to poor, or lack of, work”). While this is an area that is almost always identified as requiring improvement in culture surveys, the Ministry received ratings which were significantly lower than the benchmark.
- › **Many people see limited opportunities for career progression.** Only a quarter of respondents said that they were satisfied with their opportunities for career progression. Many respondents requested greater clarity of what is required to reach the next level (e.g. “I think showing clearly a path for career progression and what to work towards for progression in your career would be helpful”). Again, while this area is frequently identified as needing improvement within other organisations, the Ministry received ratings which were significantly lower than the benchmark.
- › **Many people are dissatisfied with their opportunities for professional development.** Well under half of respondents said that they were satisfied with this area. People requested more development opportunities, greater clarity and easier access to the opportunities that do exist, and more tailoring of development opportunities to the skills required in people's roles (e.g. “I would prefer that my professional development is a factor that is considered is deciding what work is being done, not just left as a post-hoc thing that tries to get wedged into the work already decided. I also find that we are made to do a lot of workshops that are very generic and don't contribute to professional development... Any workshop that genuinely contributes to professional development is going to be targeted to the skills of the person's job”).
- › **Some people believe they are underpaid compared with others in similar roles.** Fewer than half of respondents said that they were satisfied with the pay and benefits they receive. A number of respondents commented that their pay is lower than they could achieve elsewhere in the public sector (e.g. “The pay at MCH is well below many other public sector departments [up to 20% lower at MCH than at other agencies for the same role]”). Several respondents also expressed concern about the current government ‘pay freeze’.
- › **Many people believe that work could be better planned, commissioned, and organised.** Many respondents expressed frustration that managers' priorities and expectations are unclear or change unexpectedly. These respondents asked for the Ministry to clarify its overall strategy, and for managers to invest in clear and thorough commissioning which includes an explanation of the context and purpose of the work (e.g. “Instead of describing what they want, senior leaders and managers typically only tell us what they don't want or what we have done wrong. It would be better to have an indication of what good work is expected to look like... [which is] specific and detailed with explanations backing them up”). Various respondents also requested clearer roles and responsibilities, better project management and business planning, the avoidance of scope creep, and streamlined consultation and review processes (e.g. “We operate without a clear vision of what success looks like, and the paths and priorities for getting there. Everyone has different views about what is in and out of scope, who is doing what

and responsible for what... we are also constantly reacting to whatever is happening that week or day - there is no forward view or looking ahead. We need a clear work programme and plan").

- › **People believe that they are expected to show cultural skills, but that they are not sufficiently supported or rewarded for them.** Most respondents did not feel adequately supported to achieve the level of cultural capability expected of them (e.g. "Developing competency in te reo and tikanga is talked about a lot, but in the time I have been here I have not had the opportunity, or specifically given the time or resources, to actually develop these skills"). Relatedly, several respondents noted that the people who provide cultural support are stretched too thin. Several respondents also commented that while cultural capability is highly valued in theory, it is not adequately rewarded in practice (e.g. "Staff with competency in te reo and tikanga are expected to help everyone who needs it - even if it's not their job. More work and stress is placed on staff with te reo and tikanga experience and knowledge, without adequate acknowledgement and compensation").
- › **People report experiencing difficulties with specific leaders.** A minority of respondents made comments regarding leaders in the organisation which were very negative and/or concerning. These comments have been provided to the Chief Executive in confidence to raise with leaders directly.

Group comparisons

Key observations from the comparisons across groups include:

- › Teams vary widely in their levels of engagement and satisfaction.
- › Permanent staff are the most satisfied but the least engaged. Fixed-term staff were dissatisfied with their job security, and several commented that they receive very short notice about contract renewal.
- › Overall differences in engagement and satisfaction between Māori and New Zealand Europeans are small. Compared with New Zealand Europeans, Māori staff were equally satisfied with how well they are treated by their managers and work colleagues, and with their opportunities for career progression. They were slightly more satisfied with their job security and opportunities for professional development. However, they were less satisfied with their pay and work-life balance.
- › Individuals who did not answer the demographic questions, or the questions about their role within the organisation, were less engaged and satisfied than other people.

Recommendations

Based on the areas for improvement identified by the culture survey, potential actions that the Ministry could consider might include:

- › Providing leaders with greater training and support with managing performance.
- › Implementing clearer career progression pathways.
- › Implementing a more structured and targeted approach to professional development.
- › Acknowledging current pay constraints, reviewing how the benefits offered by roles within the Ministry compare with similar roles in other organisations.
- › Providing greater clarity about the Ministry's overall strategy and priorities.
- › Improving how work is planned, commissioned, and organised (e.g. strengthening project management and work planning practices and/or providing relevant training).
- › Providing greater access to training in cultural skills (while acknowledging the need not to overburden current staff).
- › Where appropriate, providing greater recognition and reward for cultural skills.
- › Exploring the underlying causes of the reported difficulties with specific leaders, and working with these leaders to resolve these issues.
- › Offering confidential support to people who are distressed, including communications to ensure that people are aware of any existing channels for support (e.g. Employee Assistance and/or confidential channels for people to further discuss their survey responses).

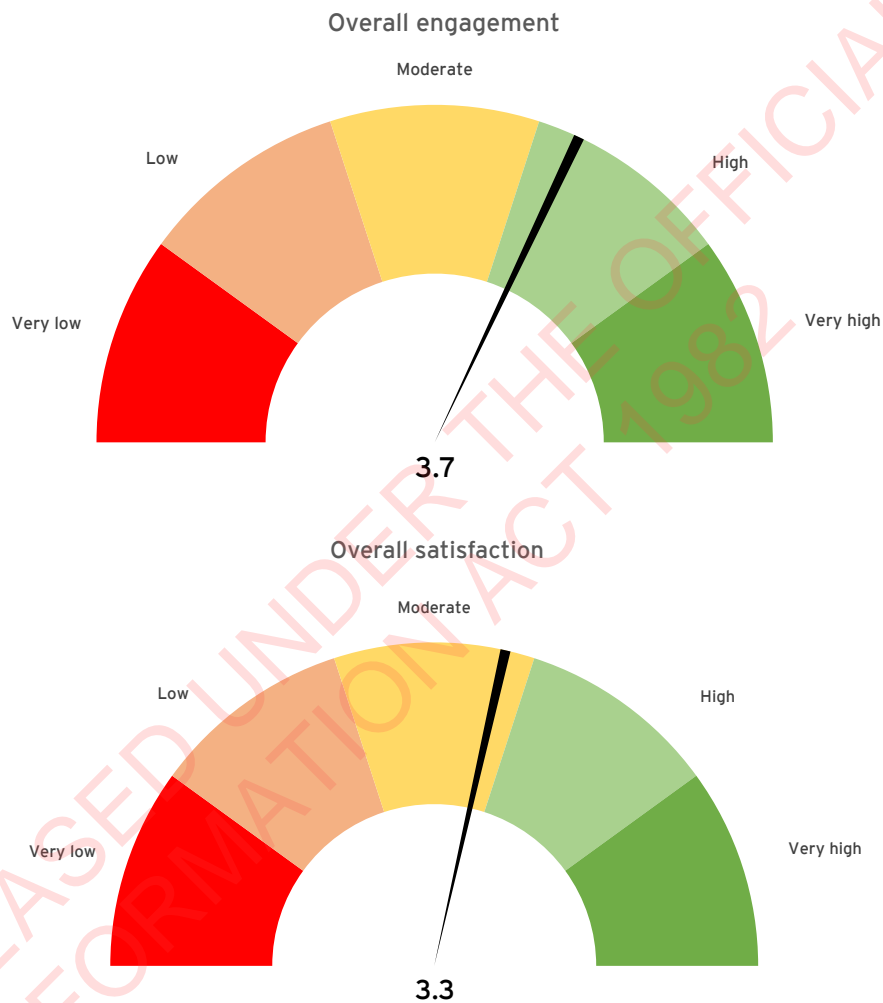
- › Implementing peer learning and coaching between the leaders of more and less satisfied and engaged teams.
- › Where possible, providing fixed-term employees with greater clarity about their prospects for future employment at the Ministry (e.g. when contracts are renewed, completing this process well before they expire).

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Results summary

Your people's engagement and satisfaction

Employee engagement measures the enthusiasm with which your people strive towards your organisation's goals, and employee satisfaction measures how content they are with what your organisation offers. These charts show people's overall levels of engagement and satisfaction.



What you can do

Based on the organisational drivers your people perceive to require most improvement, your managers and senior leaders can lift people's engagement and satisfaction by taking steps to:

- › Address low performance
- › Recognise high performance
- › Give accurate feedback about performance
- › Clearly explain what they expect of staff
- › Plan and organise work in ways that make it easy for staff to get things done

More in-depth information about these results, and about your organisational culture, can be found on the following pages.

About this culture survey

What this culture survey will help you to achieve

The aim of this report is to assist you to enhance the performance of your organisation by strengthening employee engagement and satisfaction. This report provides information about five key components of organisational climate:

- **Culture** looks at what ways of working are tacitly encouraged in your organisation and is key to optimising organisational performance by understanding how your people work together and respond to change.
- **Engagement** looks at how enthusiastically your people strive towards your organisation's goals and is a key predictor of organisational performance.
- **Satisfaction** looks at how satisfied your employees are with what your organisation offers and is a key predictor of retention.
- **Drivers** looks at the factors which drive engagement, satisfaction, and culture.
- **Cultural capability** looks at how comfortable people feel with their personal levels of cultural capability, and how well supported they feel by your organisation to develop their skills in this area.

How the culture survey works



Step one: Respondents complete online surveys

Cerno emails your people an online survey, which asks about your organisational culture and their work engagement and satisfaction. People comment on up to three strengths and three areas that could be improved.



Step two: Responses are analysed

Cerno produces a report which describes your overall organisational culture and the areas where people are most engaged and disengaged, along with potential actions. Optionally, we produce separate reports for different areas of your organisation.



Step three: You take action to lift engagement and satisfaction

With support and advice from Cerno, people in your organisation work together to identify and implement specific steps to lift engagement and satisfaction. The gains you achieve can be measured in a follow-up survey.

How many people responded

Respondents



165

out of 229 who were invited

Response rate



72%

Indicates a reliable survey of employee opinion

Your organisational culture

What this section will help you achieve

Organisational culture describes the ways of working that are tacitly encouraged in your organisation, based on people's values and beliefs about 'the way things are done around here'. Organisational culture is pervasive, enduring, and implicit. By examining your organisational culture, this section will help you to optimise organisational performance by understanding how your people work together and respond to change.

How people describe your culture

Your people were asked, 'What three words would you use to describe our organisational culture?'. This picture shows the words that they used to describe your organisation. Larger words were used more frequently. Only words that were used at least twice are included in the word cloud, and very similar words (e.g. 'silos' and 'siloed') have been combined.

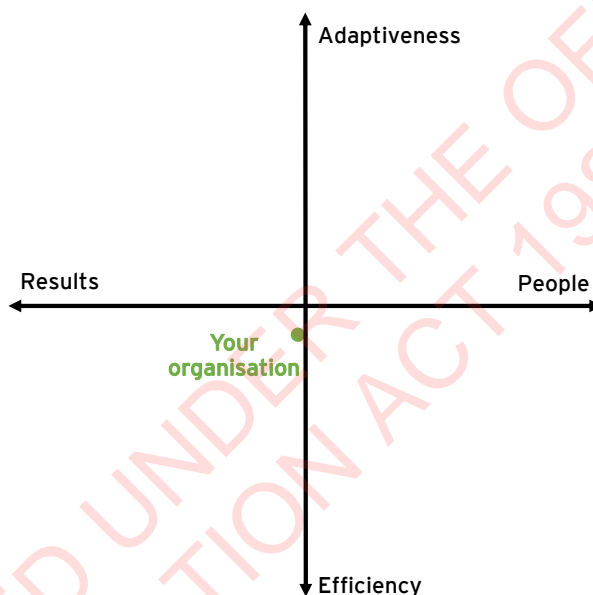


Your organisation's culture type

Research suggests that there are two major dimensions of organisational culture:

- › **Results vs. People.** In a **results** culture, people work independently to get things done, and value those who contribute by achieving individual results. In a **people** culture, people work interdependently, and value those who contribute by supporting and being considerate of others.
- › **Efficiency vs. Adaptiveness.** In an **efficiency** culture, people achieve results through standardisation and consistency, and value those who contribute by reliably doing their part. In an **adaptiveness** culture, people achieve results by tailoring their approaches to different situations, and value those who contribute new ideas.

As the chart below shows, people at your organisation primarily focus on **results** and value **efficiency**. These results were calculated by taking the average of the relevant dimensions of your organisational culture (see the next section for details). Overall, these results suggest that your organisation has a **delivery culture**. However, your results were close to **balanced**, suggesting that your organisation also shows some features of other organisational cultures.



What your organisation's culture type means

As noted above, your results suggest that your organisation has a **delivery culture**. When at their best, in a delivery culture people:

- › Show strong focus and clarity about desired outcomes.
- › Make quick decisions.
- › Get things done efficiently.
- › Minimise costs.
- › Take a pragmatic approach to issues.
- › Reward people for high achievement.

When at their worst, in a delivery culture people:

- › Fail to notice the impact of decisions on people (e.g. stress and burnout).
- › Compete rather than collaborate.
- › Experience conflict issues and a lack of communication.
- › Miss opportunities for innovation.
- › Fail to respond flexibly and effectively to change.
- › Forget to recognise those who generate new ideas, or who support others to succeed.

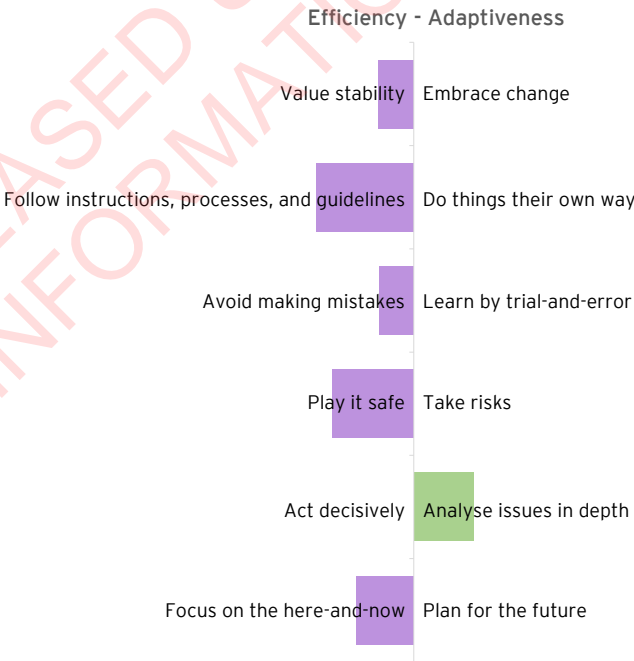
Your organisation's culture in-depth

The charts below show your organisational culture in greater depth. The survey asked people to rate the balance that their colleagues strike between different ways of working (i.e. in response to the question, "The people I work with...", followed by the different ways of working shown in the charts below). Long chart bars indicate that people consistently rated their colleagues as showing a particular way of working.

The culture aspects shown in this chart reflect the balance between results and people:



The culture aspects in this chart reflect the balance between efficiency and adaptiveness:



Leveraging these insights to lift organisational performance

You may find it helpful to consider how you can use your understanding of your organisation's culture type to:

- › Identify how you can pitch your organisational communications in ways which will resonate with your people's values.
- › Anticipate cultural fit and points of friction during the hiring and induction of new staff and managers.
- › Examine the alignment between your organisation's culture and your organisation's strategy, and how this may impact on your ability to design and deliver new initiatives.
- › Understand points of similarity and difference between your organisation and stakeholder organisations, which could lead to areas of alignment or conflict.
- › Cerno can provide tailored advice on leveraging these insights into your organisation's culture, on request.

Leading culture change

While no organisational culture type is inherently superior to any other, it is worth considering how well your organisation's culture aligns with your organisation's strategy, the field it operates in, and the people it needs to attract for future success. If you decide to reshape your organisation's culture, potential levers for driving culture change include your:

- › Leadership behaviours.
- › Hiring decisions.
- › Organisational communications.
- › Performance and reward systems.
- › Training and induction programmes.
- › Business systems, processes, and procedures.
- › Formal change initiatives.

Cerno can provide further advice on leading culture change, on request.

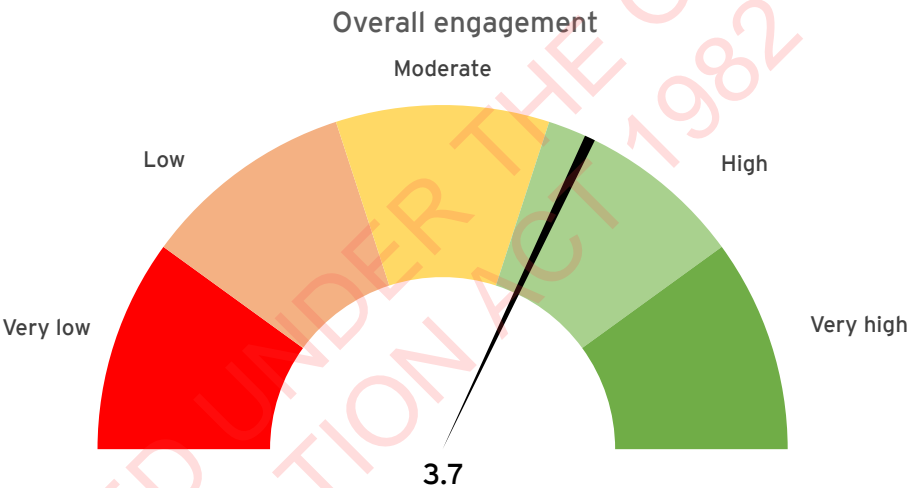
Engagement

What this section will help you achieve

Employee engagement is the enthusiasm with which your people strive towards your organisation's goals and is a key predictor of organisational performance. Engaged employees feel, think, and act differently from disengaged employees. For example, they feel energised by their work, believe that their work is important, and take the initiative to go beyond what they have been asked to do. By examining your people's engagement, this section will help you to optimise organisational performance by spotting opportunities to resolve simmering issues, recognising the areas where people are going 'above and beyond', and showing people you care about their morale.

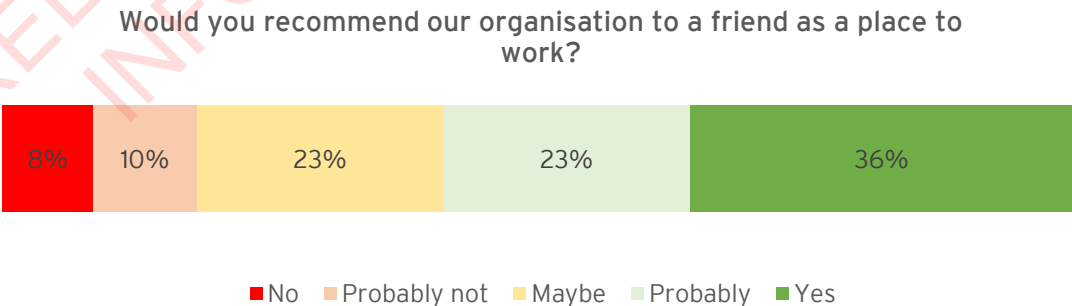
Overall engagement

This chart shows how engaged your people are in their work, based on their average rating for the engagement questions shown overleaf (in the in-depth results). The number shows the average rating on a five-point scale (1 = 'Rarely', 2 = 'Occasionally', 3 = 'Sometimes', 4 = 'Usually', and 5 = 'Almost always').



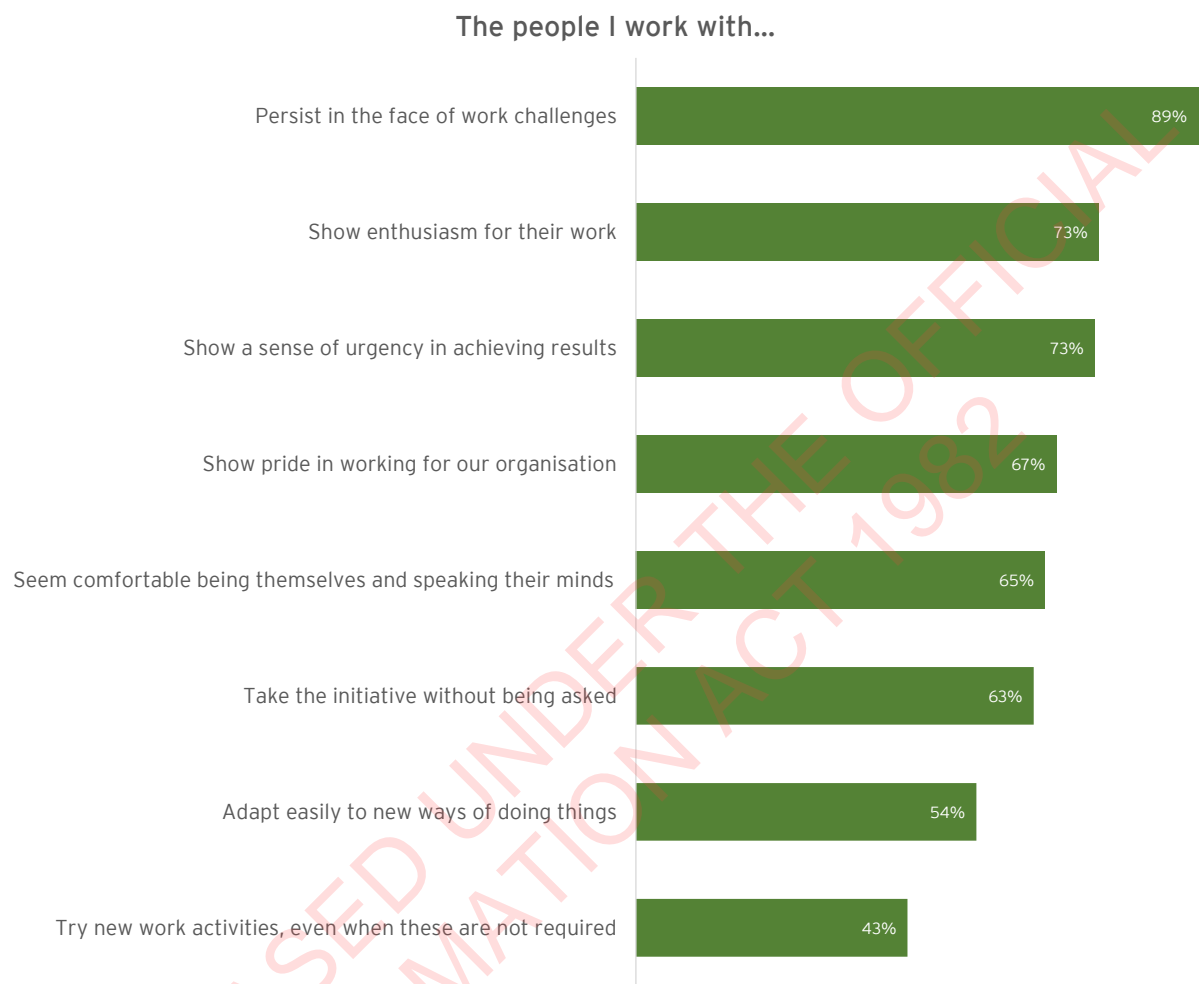
Willingness to recommend

This chart shows the responses your people gave to the question, 'Would you recommend our organisation to a friend as a place to work?'



In-depth results

This chart shows the different aspects of people’s engagement in their work, based on the percentage of people who responded ‘Usually’ or ‘Almost always’ when asked whether the people they work with show each of the behaviours listed below. Research has shown that these areas are fundamental to employee engagement and organisational performance. The areas where people are most engaged are shown first.



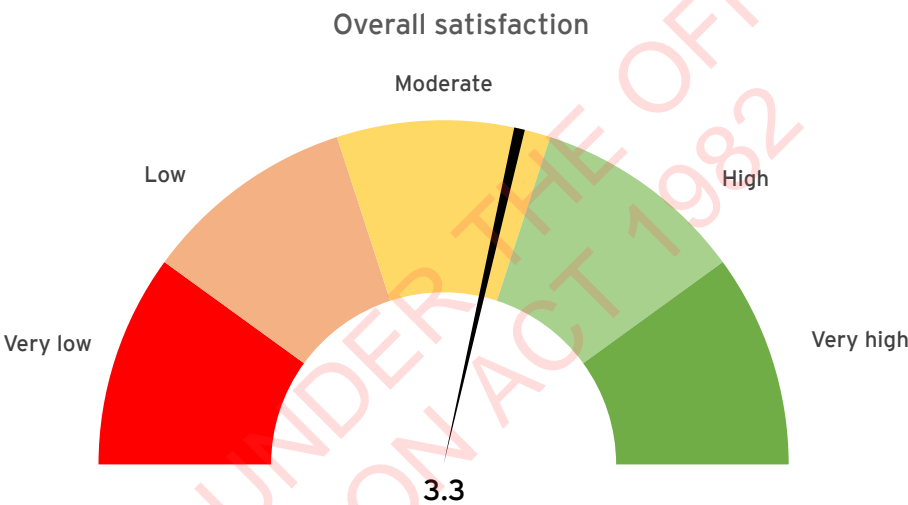
Satisfaction

What this section will help you achieve

Employee satisfaction looks at how content your people are with what your organisation offers and is a key predictor of retention. For example, how satisfied are they with their job security, benefits, and opportunities for advancement? By examining your people’s satisfaction, this section will help you to optimise organisational performance by retaining talent, spotting opportunities to address discontent, and showing people you care about their wellbeing.

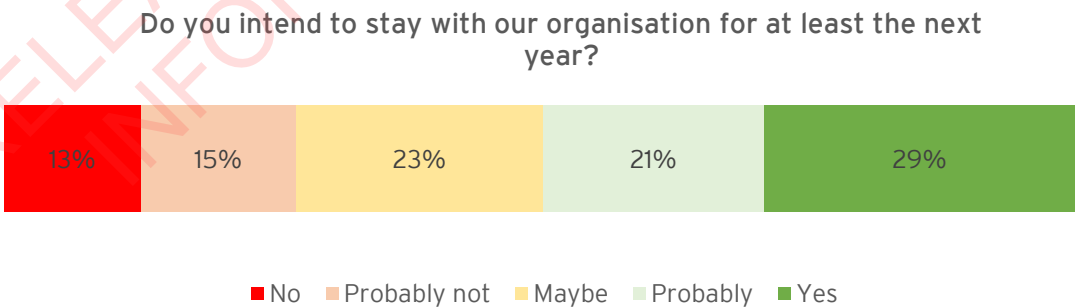
Overall satisfaction

This chart shows how satisfied your people are with their work, based on their average rating for the satisfaction questions shown overleaf (in the in-depth results).



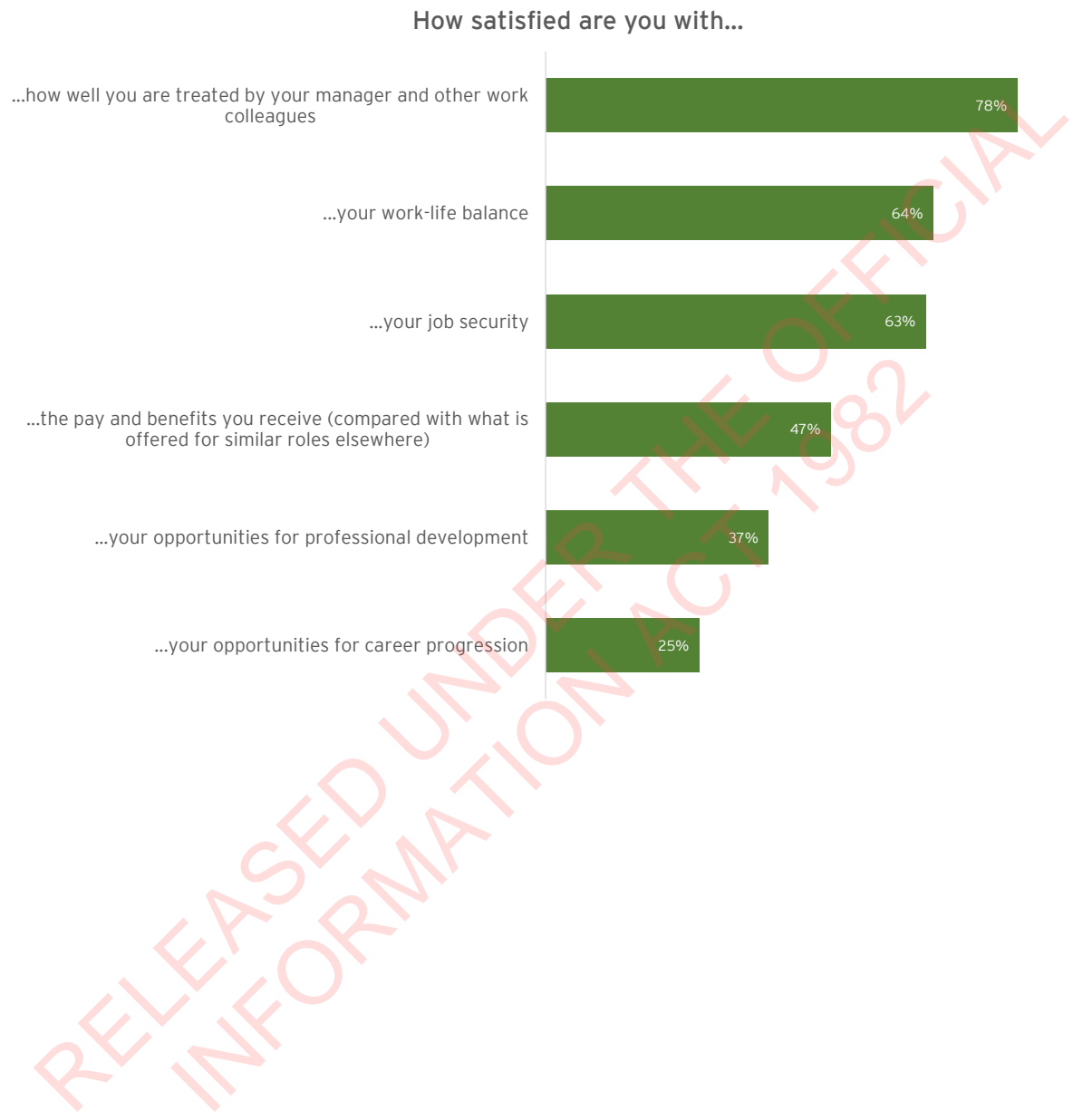
Intention to stay

This chart shows the responses your people gave to the question, ‘Do you intend to stay with our organisation for at least the next year?’



In-depth results

This chart shows the different aspects of people’s satisfaction with their work, based on the percentage of people who responded ‘Mostly’ or ‘Very’ when asked how satisfied they are with the areas listed below. Research has shown that these areas are fundamental to job satisfaction and employee retention. The areas where people are most satisfied are shown first.



Organisational drivers

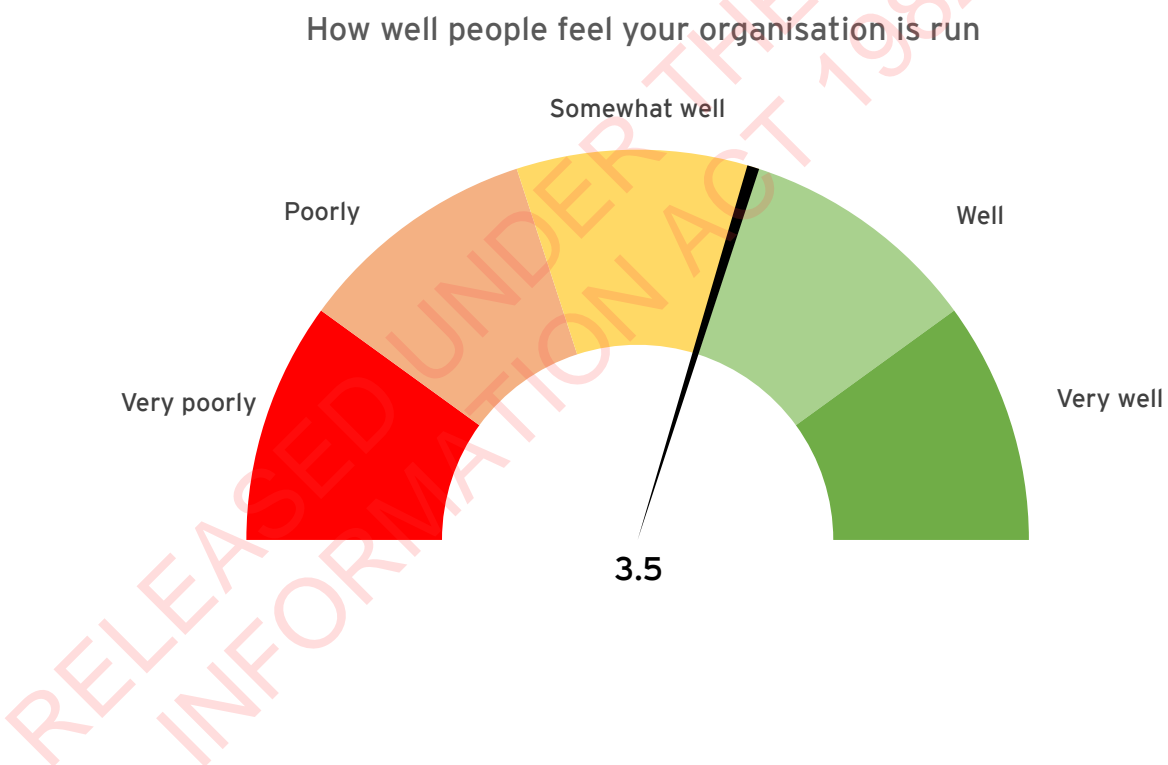
What this section will help you achieve

Organisational drivers are the factors which drive engagement, satisfaction, and culture. This survey focuses on the organisational drivers that your organisation’s leaders can directly influence. For example, do leaders provide people with a balance of autonomy and support? Do they recognise and reward high performance? Taken as a whole, your people’s ratings of these organisational drivers indicate their views of how well your organisation is run.

Overall perceptions

By examining your organisational drivers, this section will help you to optimise organisational performance by recognising what your organisation is doing well, identifying the most effective ways to improve people’s engagement and satisfaction, and showing people that you care about the factors that most affect their lives at work.

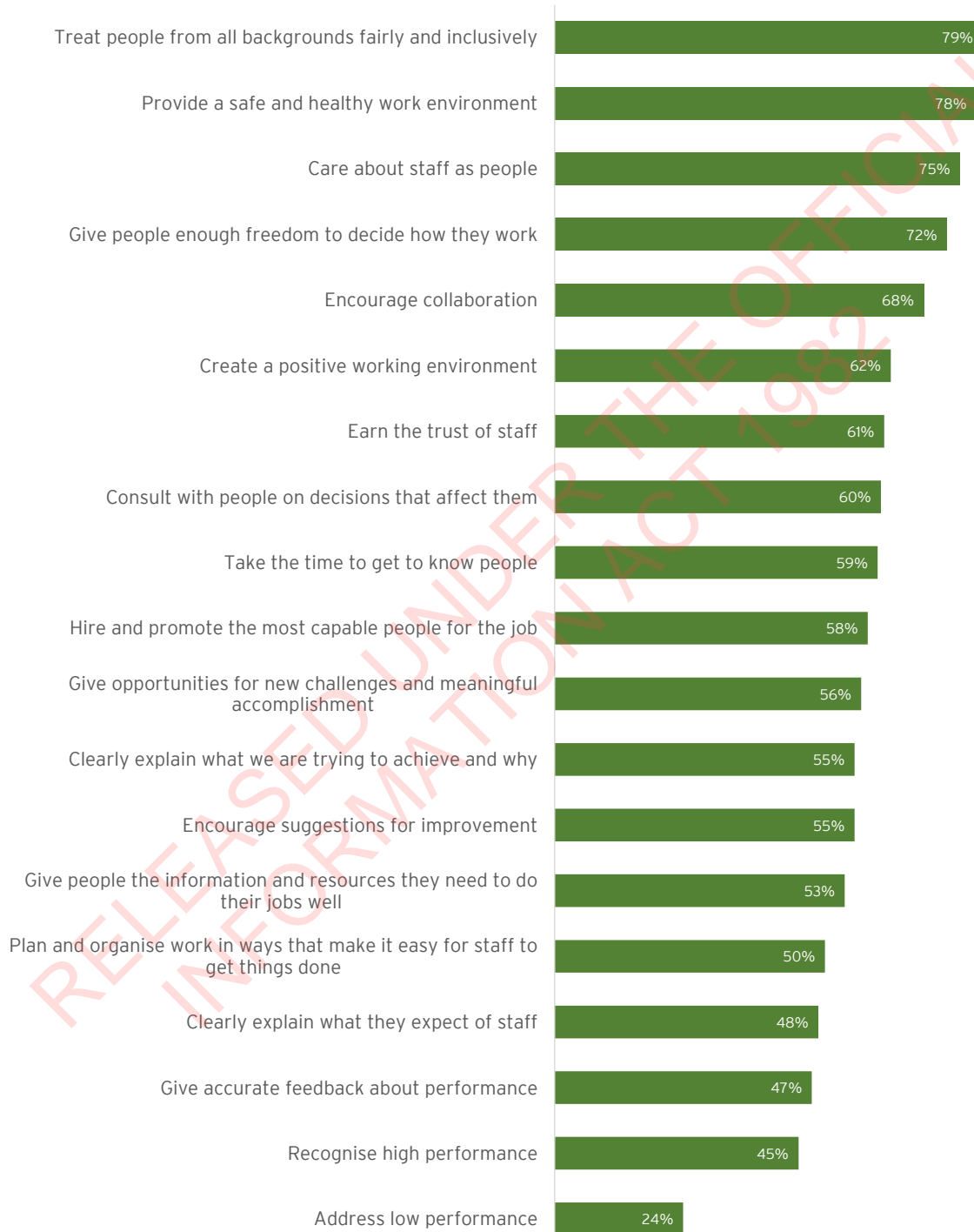
This chart summarises how well your people feel your organisation is run, based on their average ratings for the organisational practices questions shown overleaf.



In-depth results

This chart shows people's perceptions of your organisational practices, based on the percentage of people who responded 'Usually' or 'Almost always' when asked whether senior leaders and managers model the practices listed below. These organisational practices are those that have been shown by research to lead to high levels of engagement, satisfaction, and organisational performance. The areas where your organisation is perceived to do well are listed first.

In my personal experience, senior leadership and managers in my Group / area of the business...



Cultural capability

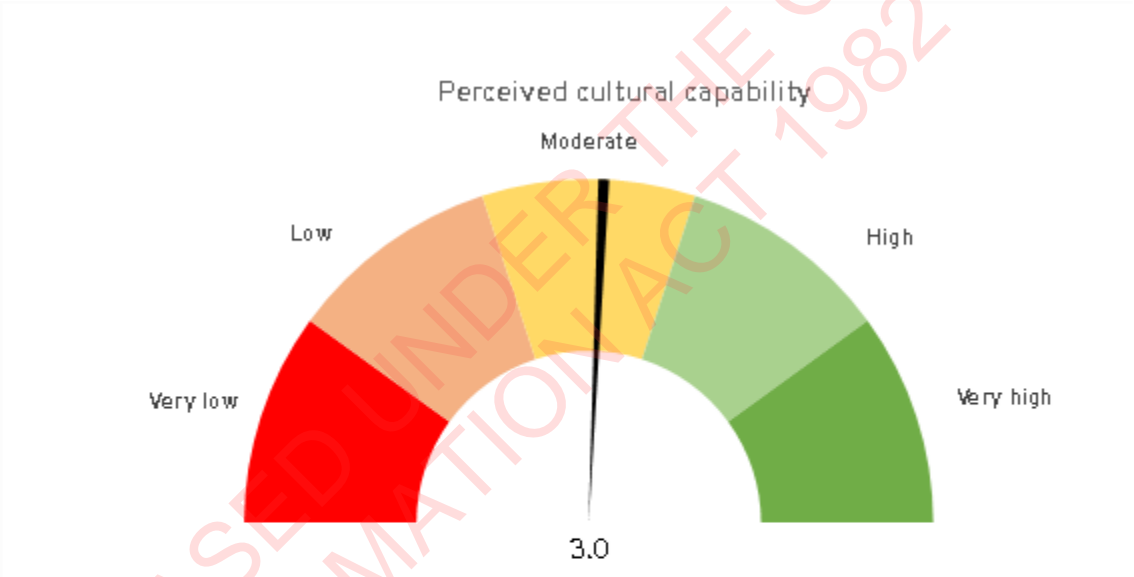
What this section will help you achieve

Cultural capability looks at how comfortable people feel with their personal levels of cultural capability, and how well supported they feel by your organisation to develop their skills in this area. For example, how culturally safe do they feel doing their jobs and working with Māori communities? By examining perceptions of cultural capability, this section will help you to assess your organisation's progress in this area and identify potential areas for improvement.

When interpreting the results shown in this section, it is important to remember that they reflect people's subjective perceptions rather than objectively measured capability. Ratings in this area are likely to be influenced by perceived changes in expectations, as well as by changes in actual capability levels.

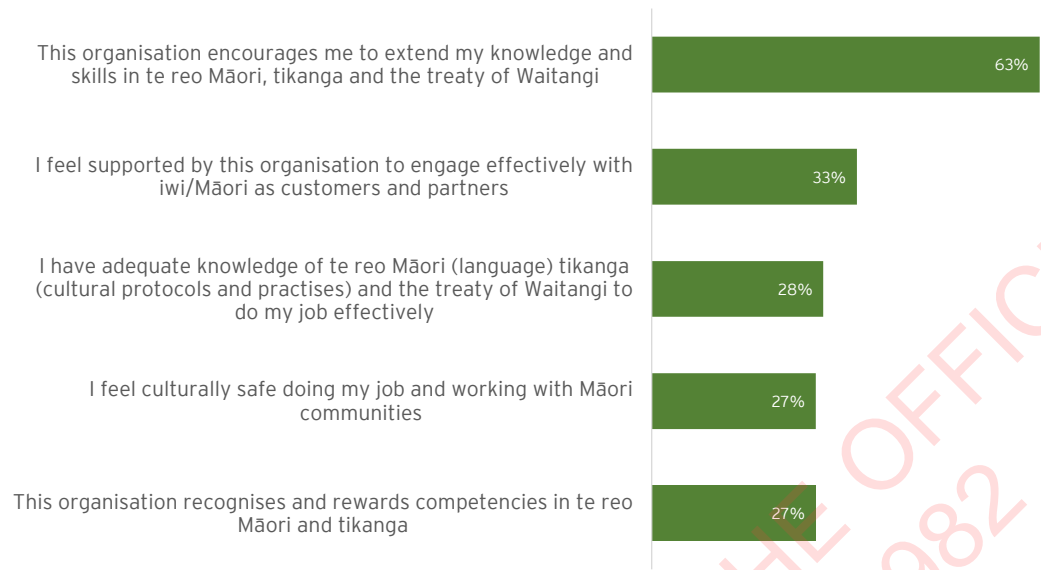
Overall perceptions

This chart shows overall perceptions of cultural capability within your organisation, based on their average rating for the cultural capability questions shown overleaf (in the in-depth results).



In-depth results

This chart shows the percentage of people who responded ‘Usually’ or ‘Almost always’ in response to the cultural capability questions listed below. The questions that received the highest ratings are shown first.



Guidelines for using this report

- › The sole purpose of this report is to inform the Ministry for Culture and Heritage about your organisational culture and people's work engagement and satisfaction. Should you wish to use this report for a purpose other than that originally intended, please contact Cerno.
- › This report is private, confidential, and for internal Ministry for Culture and Heritage use only. Please keep it in a secure location with restricted access.

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