



Oral Health Workforce

Northern Region Current State Analysis

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Project scope:

To review publicly funded oral health workforce in the Northern Region of Aotearoa New Zealand

Jan 2022 – July 2022

This presentation:

- National workforce overview
- Northern Region current state
- Education & training – Oral Health Therapy and Dental Assisting
- Some questions currently being asked
- 5 Key points on current activity

Regulated roles - 2021 DCNZ national registrations

- **Dentists & Dental Specialists** ➤ **3,222**
- **Oral Health Therapists** ➤ **815**
- **Dental Therapists** ➤ **374**
- **Dental Hygienists** ➤ **472**
- **Dental Technicians** ➤ **392**
- **Clinical Dental Technicians** ➤ **254**
- **Total – 5,529 (public & private)**

Serving a population of
5,127,100 of whom
1,157,210 are under 18 yrs



International comparison - dentists

OECD dentist:1000 head of population

OECD average = 1.09

Highest Norway = 1.43

Lowest Korea & Netherlands = 0.62

1000:0.63

In Aotearoa

New Zealand for
every 1000 head
of population
there is

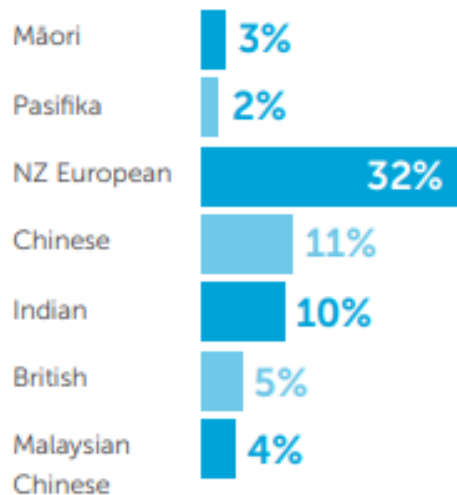
0.63

of a dentist

National Regulated Workforce Demographics

Dentists & Dental Specialists

Ethnicity



Gender



Average age
45 yrs

New registrants with overseas
or local qualifications

47% overseas
qualifications

53% Aotearoa
New Zealand
qualifications



Oral Health Therapists

Gender



Average age
32 yrs

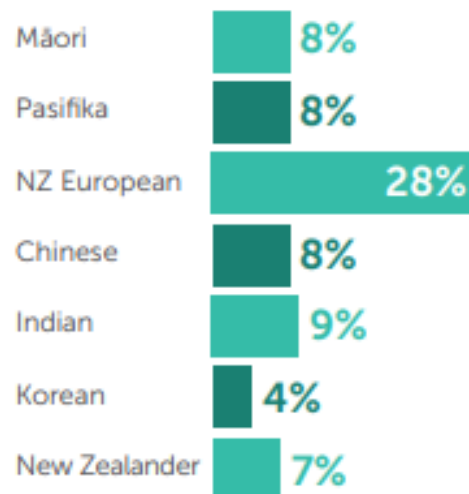
New registrants with overseas
or local qualifications

5% overseas
qualifications

95% Aotearoa
New Zealand
qualifications

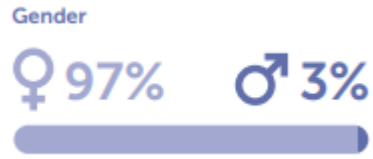
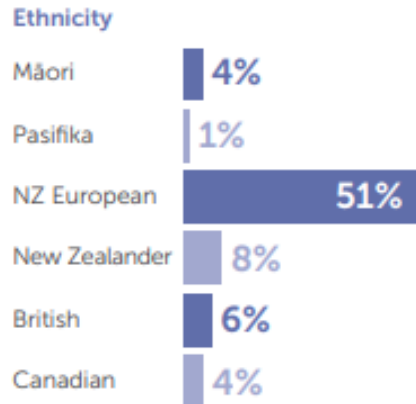


Ethnicity

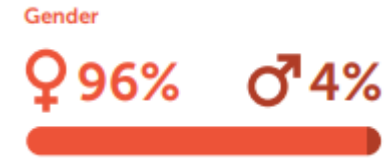
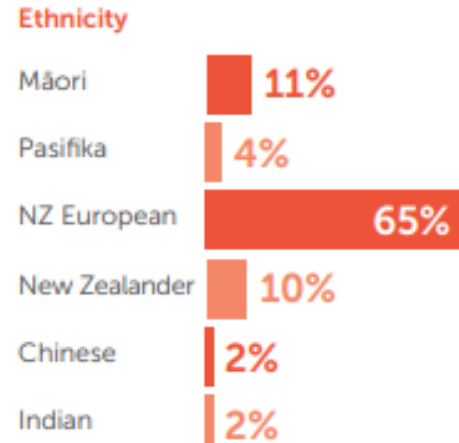


National Regulated Workforce Demographics

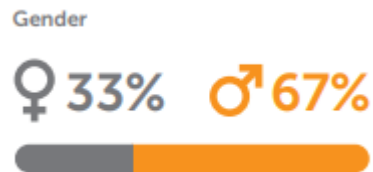
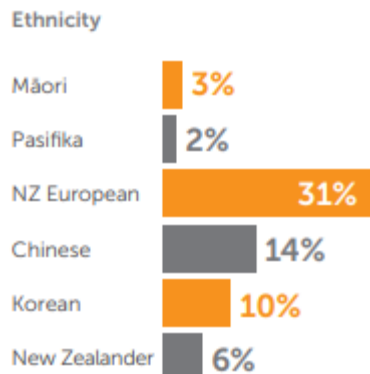
Dental Hygienists



Dental Therapists



Dental Technicians & Clinical Dental Technicians



With thanks to DCNZ for permission to use these infographics

Unregulated roles

Clinical

- Dental Assistants
- Dental Auxiliary
- Oral Health Promotion Officers

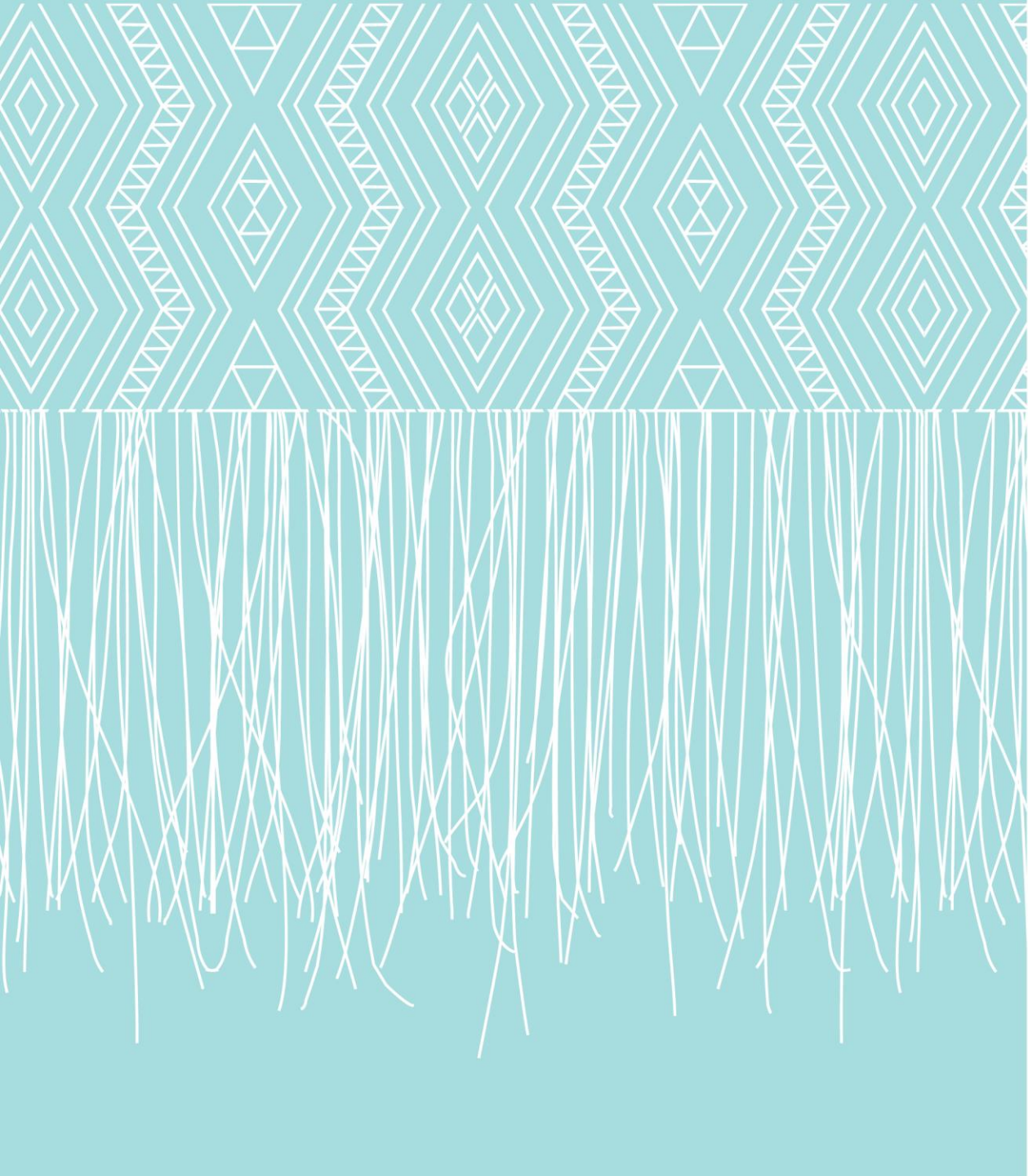
Non-clinical

- Managers
- Administrators
- Reception and bookings
- Pathway co-ordinators and community engagement

Data related to unregulated roles is dispersed across various databases

- **2018 CENSUS – 3,240 Dental Assistants working in New Zealand**
- **2022 Health Workforce Data – 508 Dental Assistant FTE in our public services**

Opportunity for a whole sector workforce survey?



Northern region

Three services

Te Tai Tokerau Oral Health Service

Serves Northland – all age groups, community and hospital services

Auckland Regional Dental Service (ARDS)

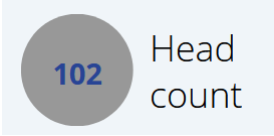
Serves Metro Auckland 1yr old to school year 8, is a community dental service

Te Toka Tumai Hospital & Specialist Dental Service

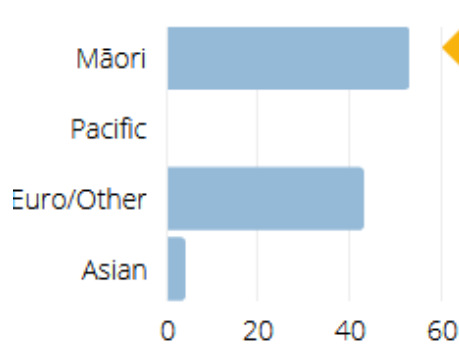
Serves Metro Auckland – all ages, is a hospital specialist service

Workforce stats

Te Tai Tokerau

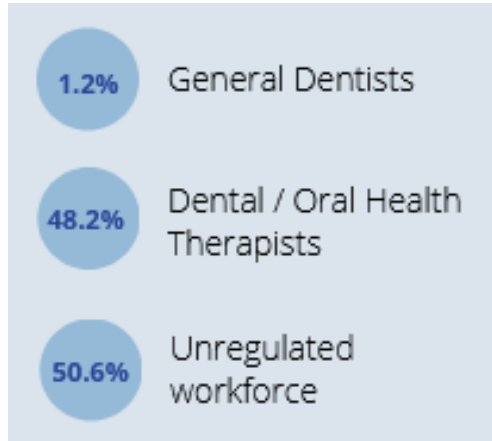


Ethnicity is predominantly Māori & Euro/Other

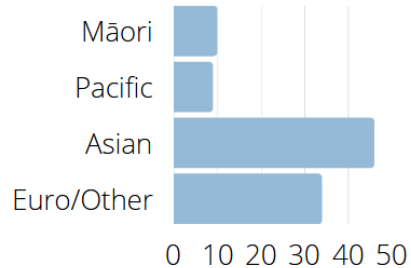


Largest Māori oral health workforce in the region

ARDS



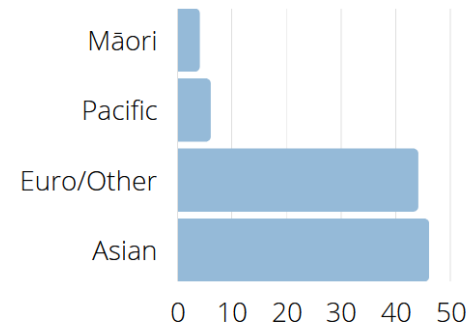
Ethnicity is predominantly Asian/Euro/Other



Te Toka Tumai



Ethnicity is predominantly Asian/Euro/Other



Workforce stats

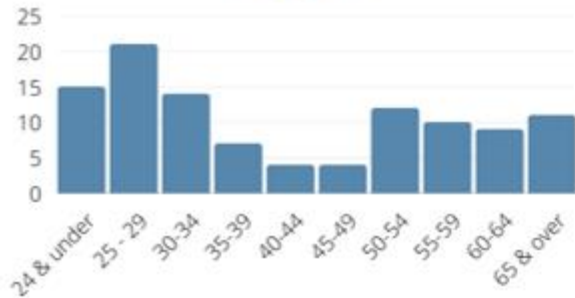
Te Tai Tokerau



93% Female 7% Male

No gender diverse data is provided

Risk associated with 35 - 50 age range



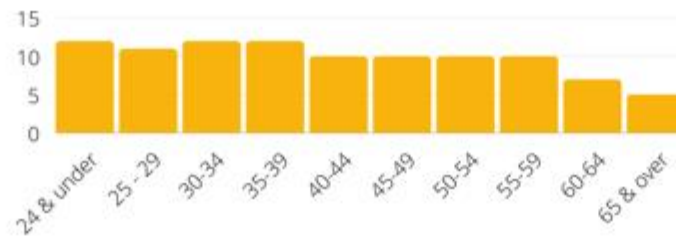
ARDS



90% Female 10% Male

No gender diverse data is provided

Age range is evenly spread



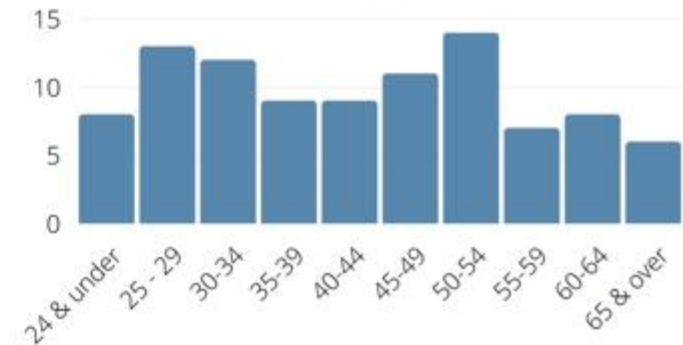
Te Toka Tumai



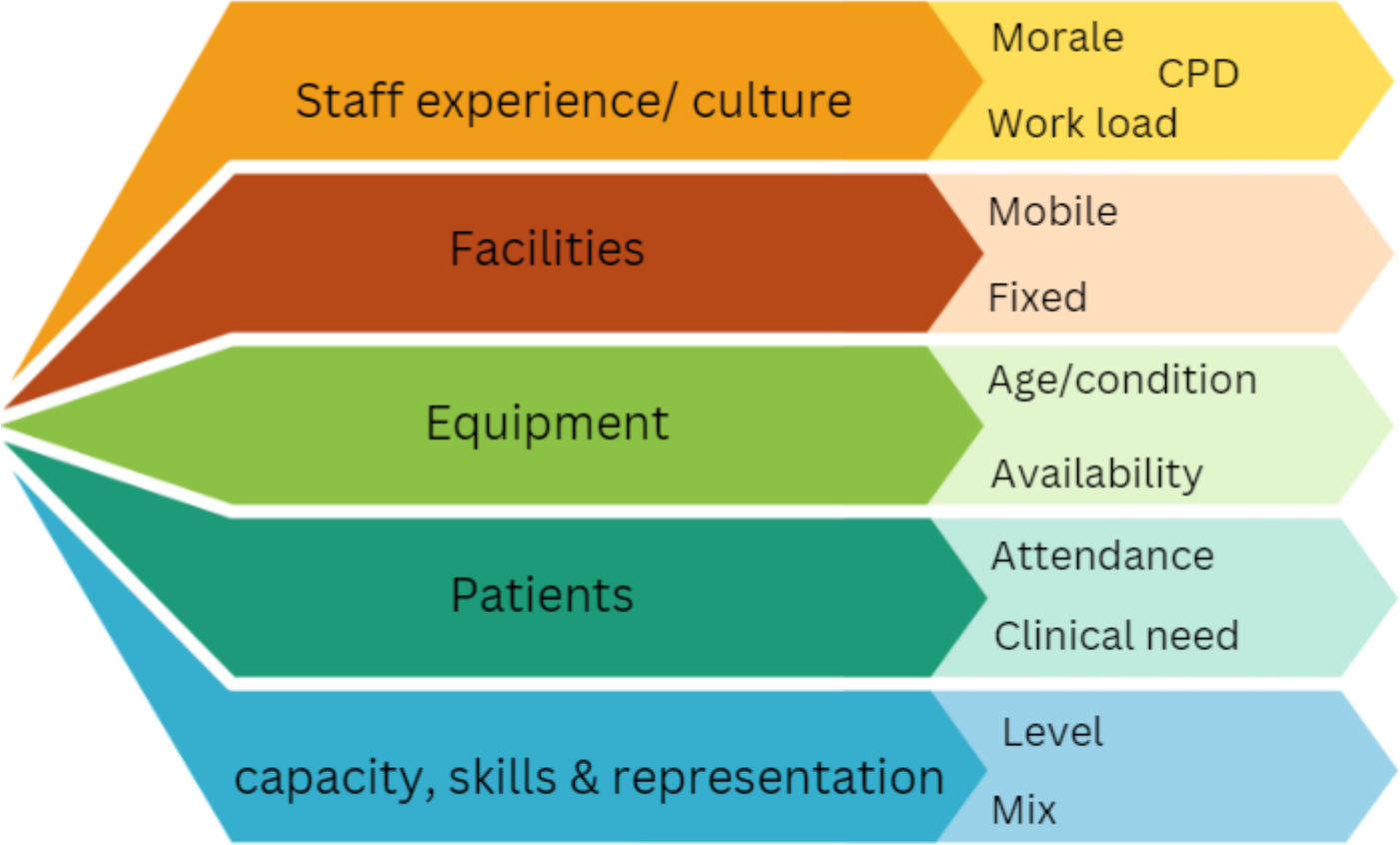
71% Female 29% Male

No gender diverse data is provided

Age range is evenly spread



Staff experience themes



Other key comments

- Pay was not in scope of the project, but it was often part of the conversation
- Preventive services currently operating as relief of pain – unable to meet all needs. Impacts of closedowns during COVID-19.
- Ratios of dental assistants to clinicians was seen as problematic, which seemed more related to recruitment and retention, than available FTE
- Mentorship and supervision - impacted by high clinical demands
- Recruitment and retention cycles (staff turn-over) for OHTs in ARDS were considered high. Difficulty recruiting dental specialists and dental assistants in Te Toka Tumai Hospital Dental Specialist Services
- Rurality remains a factor for Te Tai Tokerau
- Population growth (incl. new schools) – services and planning keeping pace
- Worries over the ongoing impact of COVID-19



**Education &
Training –
Oral Health
Therapists and
Dental Assistants**

Oral Health Therapy - AUT

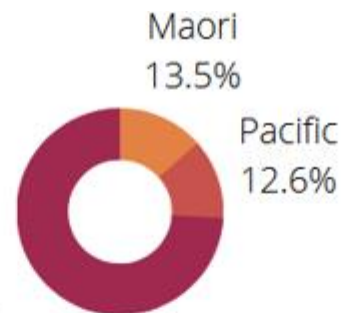
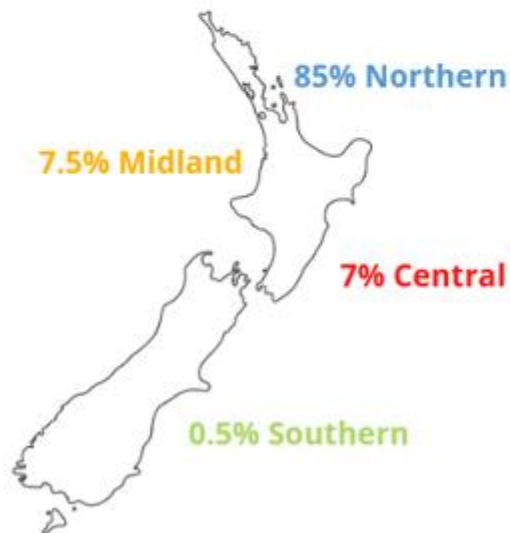
Bachelor of Health Science in Oral Health

Intake has increased from 36 to 90 in the last 6 years

Average BOH graduates 2016-2020 **34**

24% of applications result in enrollment.
Out of 252 applicants in 2022, 60 enrolled.

2016 - 2021 Students came from across the motu
- predominantly from the Northern Region



Euro/other
74%

% student age range 2016 - 2021



39%

of graduates were over 25yrs of age

61%

of graduates were under 25yrs of age

% students by gender 2016-2021



91.5% Female **8.5%** Male

No gender diverse data is provided

AUT - Northland Satellite Learning Hub.

5 Te Tai Tokerau staff are training as Oral Health Therapists through this hub. All were dental assistants in the service.

Oral Health Therapy – University of Otago

Bachelor of Oral Health

BOH capacity = 50 students

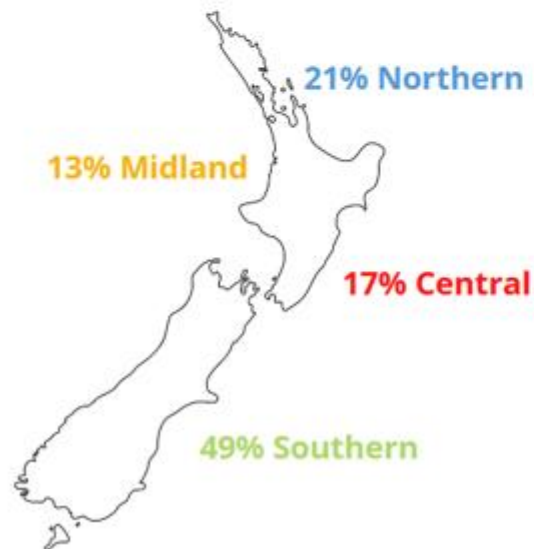
Average BOH graduates **45**

Given appropriate staffing, the capacity can flex to 60.

27%

of applications result in enrollment

Students come from across the motu



2021 Graduates



9%

of graduates were over 25yrs of age

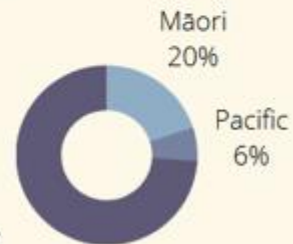
91%

of graduates were under 25yrs of age



93% Female 7% Male

No gender diverse data is provided



Euro/Other
74%

Dental Assistants

New Zealand Dental Association –

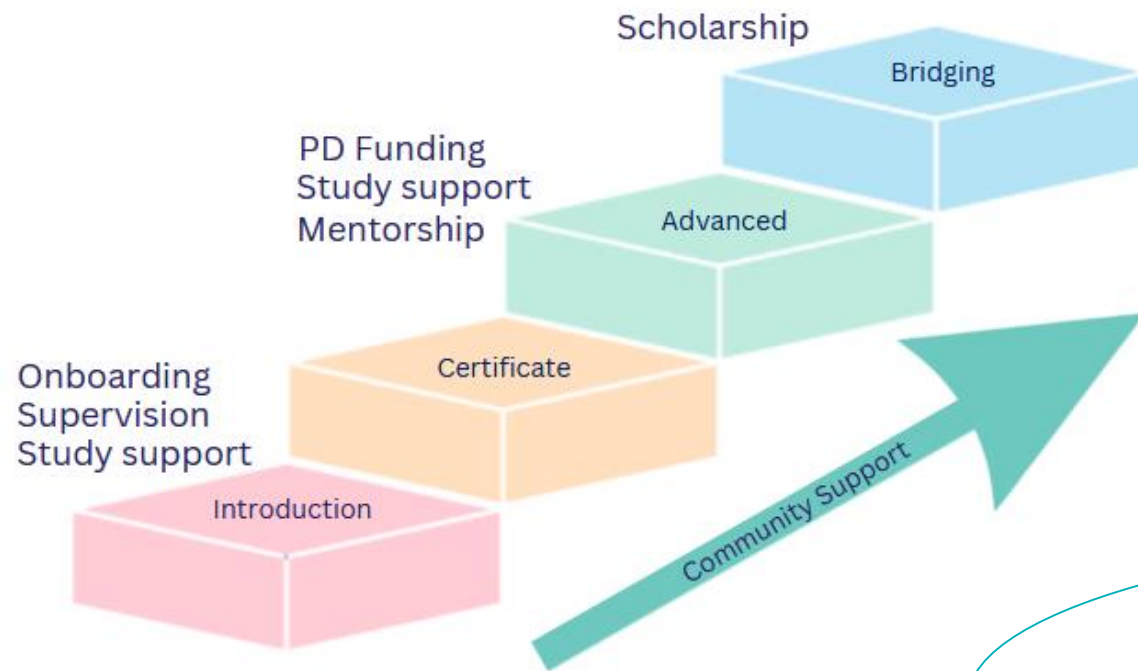
- **Introduction to Dental Assisting**
- **Certificate in Dental Assisting**

Career Force NZQA –

- **Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (L3 - Health Assistance Strand) in Dental Assisting**
- **A level 4 available but not dental specific**

High potential group – what are the career pathway possibilities?

Question being asked about developing Dental Assistant career pathways



**Is it possible to create career pathways?
Overseas examples are available.**

5 Key points

1. **National Workforce Taskforce and Profession Steering/Working Groups are underway – include Medical & Dental, Allied Health and Kaiāwhina (co-chaired between Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora)**
2. **Workforce opportunities – being explored**
3. **Uplift in OHT student placement funding approved**
4. **Relationship with Toitū Te Waiora developing well**
5. **Recognised that all aspects of oral health and dental, need investment**

Questions

