



**New Zealand
Dental Assoc.**

Fees and Dental Workforce Survey 2025

Analysis and Commentary

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Background / Introduction

The 2025 Fees and Dental Workforce Survey

This report presents the result for the first of a new annual Fee and Dental Workforce survey that the New Zealand Dental Association (NZDA) will run with their members.

Until now, fee information has only been collected every 2 to 3 years and have only been collected on a relatively small number of procedures. This more frequent, and more comprehensive, series will provide members a greater sense of any trend changes in their industry.

For the first time, the NZDA is surveying members on their workforce arrangements, including whether they have vacancies and how long it takes to fill these roles. Additionally, NZDA has taken the opportunity to understand how easy it is for New Zealanders to access dental services – be it for an emergency, or for a general consultation or treatment.

This survey is assisting NZDA to strengthen its data-driven advocacy in key areas, such as:

- **Government-funded contract negotiations:** Reliable, up-to-date fee data supports evidence-based discussions with policymakers and funders.
- **Dental workforce planning:** Sound economic insights help inform advocacy on workforce sustainability and distribution.
- **Sector and media insights:** Combining data with meaningful narrative enables NZDA to communicate the realities of dental practice to the public and media with greater depth and authority

The 2025 survey ran from 3 November 2025 to 2 December 2025.

Thank you so much to all members that participated in this year's survey. Your responses and feedback are invaluable to helping the NZDA work focus on the right things for our members, continuously improve our offerings and value for members, and set us up for improving wellbeing moving forward.



Executive Summary

Key takeaways



Small clinics

75% of respondents work in clinics with 3 or fewer dentists.



Workforce ratio

The average ratio of dentists : hygienists : dental assistants is: 1.0 : 0.4 : 1.4



Filling a dentist vacancy

On average it takes 24 weeks to recruit a dentist, with 25% of recruitments taking longer than 40 weeks.



Filling a hygienist vacancy

On average it takes 33 weeks to recruit a dental hygienist, with 25% of recruitments taking more than a year.



Filling a dental assistant vacancy

On average it takes 7 weeks to fill a dental assistant vacancy.



Recruitment for hygienist takes longer in the provinces

In the major cities dental hygienists on average take 22 weeks to fill a vacancy. In the provinces, it takes 49 weeks.



Good emergency access to dentists

64% of dentists hold emergency appointments each weekday.



Good redundancy for non-emergencies with...

62% of respondents reporting that they had available appointments on the next Monday and 87% with availability over the next week.



Easy to secure a dentist

93% of respondents reporting that their clinic is taking on new patients.



Fee increases for dentists

On average dentists have increased fees by 3.7% in the last year and intend to increase them a further 3.6% in the next 12 months.



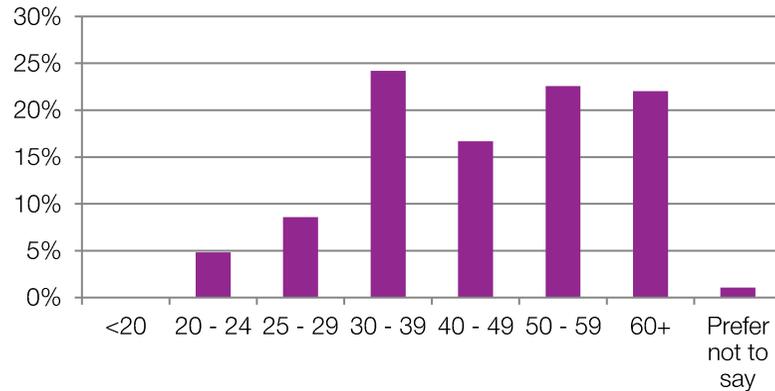
Fee increases for dental specialists

On average dental specialists have increased fees by 2.3% in the last year and intend to increase them a further 3.3% in the next 12 months.

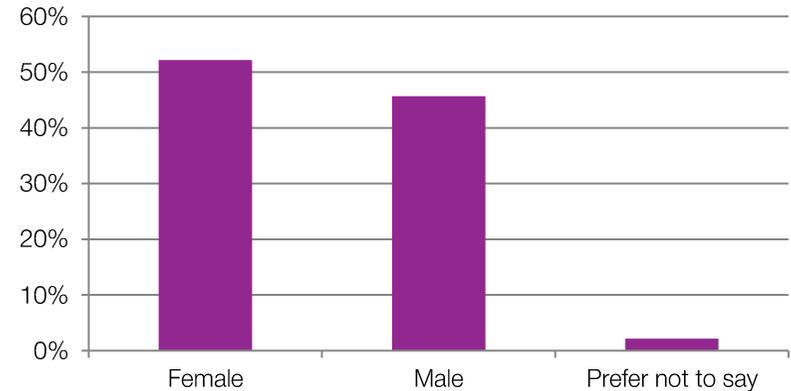
Survey Respondent Demographics

There were 491 respondents to the survey, which equates to a participation rate of 17% of our membership base of approximately 2900.

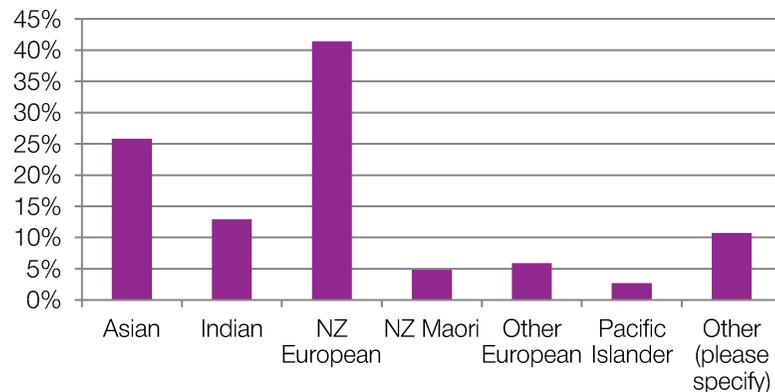
Age



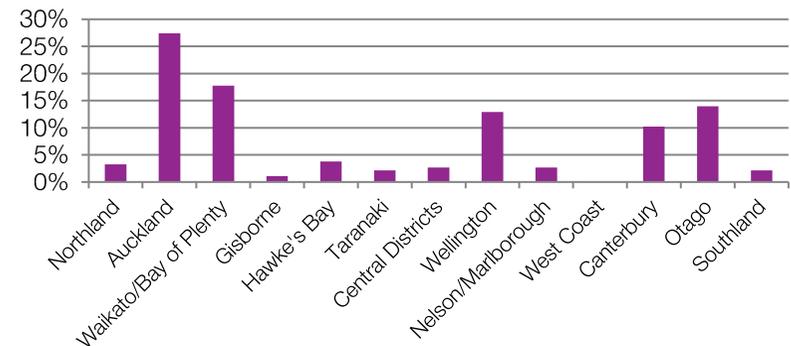
How do you identify?



What is your ethnicity?

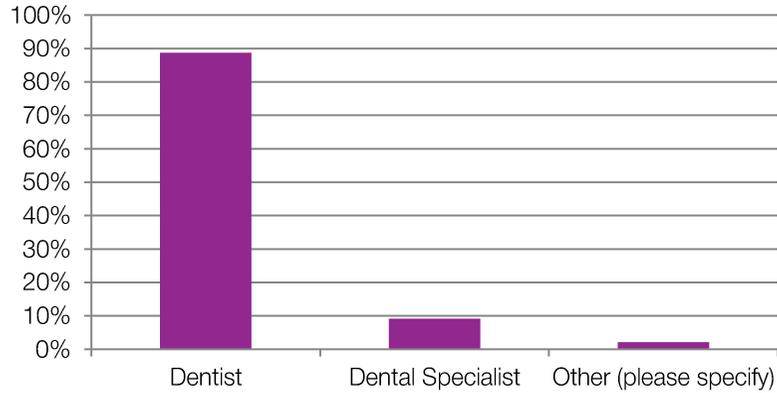


Where in New Zealand are you primarily based?

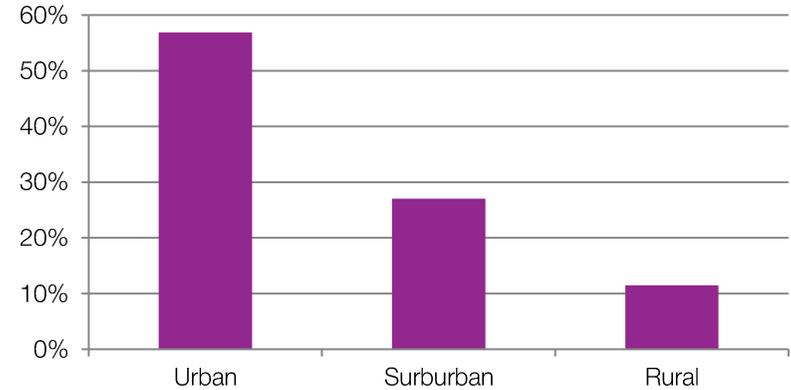


Survey Respondent Demographics

Occupation



Is your practice primarily:





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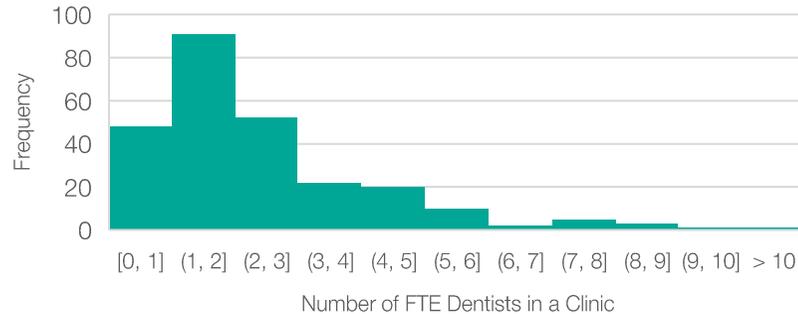
CLINIC DEMOGRAPHICS

Clinical Workforce FTE employees

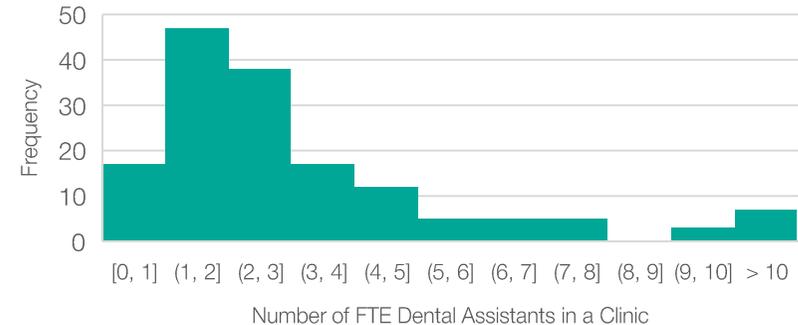
We asked respondents to provide information on the workforce structure for their clinic. For those that identified themselves as “Dentists”, we received 255 responses.

On this page is the frequency distributions of Dentists, Hygienists and Dental Assistants.

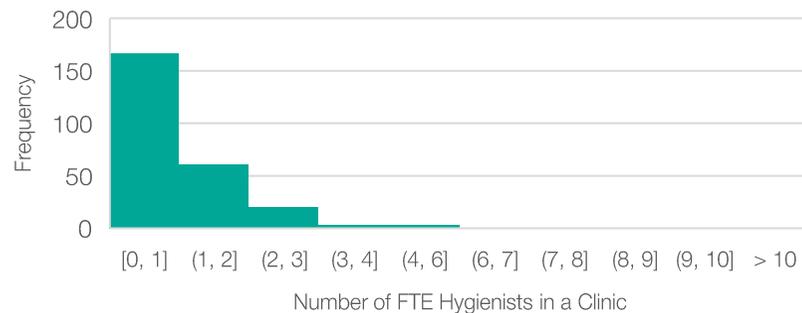
Number of Full-Time Equivalent Dentists in a Clinic



Number of Full-Time Equivalent Dental Assistants in a Clinic



Number of Full-Time Equivalent Hygienists in a Clinic



Average workforce structure in dental clinics

Number of Dentists	Average number of Hygienists	Average number of Dental Assistants
>0 - 1	0.6	1.7
>1 - 2	1.2	2.8
>2 - 3	1.2	3.5
>3 - 4	1.4	4.7
>4 - 5	1.4	6.1
>5 - 6	2.2	6.6
>6 - 7	4.0	8.5
>7 - 8	1.8	10.0
>8 - 9	2.7	14.0
>9	2.8	16.5

Clinical Workforce Vacancies

We asked respondents to detail vacancies in their clinic, which role they were to fill, and how many weeks on average they find it takes to fill the role...

	Dentists	Hygienist	Dental Assistants
Number of respondents with vacancies	48	41	24
Total vacancies across the respondents	61	43	29

Approximate weeks to fill vacancies - distributional data

	Dentists	Hygienist	Dental Assistants
Average	24	33	7
Lower Quartile	12	10	3
Median	20	26	4
Upper Quartile	40	52	7
No. of replies	45	40	52

Approximate weeks to fill vacancies

	Dentists	Hygienist	Dental Assistants
National	24.4	33.5	6.6
Major cities ¹	23.9	21.8	7.3
Provinces ²	25.5	49.2	5.2

1. Auckland, Waikato/Bay of Plenty, Wellington, Canterbury.
2. All other areas.



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EASE OF ACCESS

Ease of Access for emergencies

In this survey we wished to understand how easy it is for New Zealanders to access dental care in emergency situations.

We know, anecdotally, that clinics will reserve appointments each day for urgent care. To determine an estimate for this we asked respondents whether their clinic hold emergency appointments each day, and if so, how many?

The results, split by Dentists and Dental Specialists are:

For Dentists...

64% ...of clinics hold emergency appointments each day, with the distribution being...

Number of emergency appointments held each day	
Average	2.5
Lower Quartile	1.0
Median	2.0
Upper Quartile	3.0
No. of replies	165

For Dental Specialists...

59% ... of clinics hold emergency appointments each day, with the distribution being...

Number of emergency appointments held each day	
Average	3.5
Lower Quartile	1.5
Median	2.0
Upper Quartile	5.0
No. of replies	15

Ease of Access for non-emergencies

We also wished to understand how easy it is for New Zealanders to access dental care generally (i.e. when it isn't an emergency)

To understand this, we asked respondents:

- How many available appointments does your practice have this week?
- How many appointments are available on Monday morning – excluding emergency appointments?
- How many working days are there until your next available consultation appointment?
- How many working days are there until your next available treatment appointment?

At a national level, the results show that if you wish to see a **dentist**:

62%

... of clinics have
an appointment
on Monday

93%

... of clinics are
taking on new
patients

87%

... of clinics have
an appointment
in the next week

For the 13% of cases where you can't get
an appointment next week, you will need
to wait...

17 working days for a
consultation appointment

16 working days for a
treatment appointment

Ease of Access for non-emergencies

... And if you wish to see a **Dental Specialist**:

24%

of clinics have an appointment on Monday

100%

of clinics are taking on new patients

76%

of clinics have an appointment next week

For the 24% of cases where you can't get an appointment next week, you will need to wait...

10 working days for a consultation appointment

14 working days for a treatment appointment

Ease of Access – major cities versus provinces

Further to the analysis above, we explore the ease of access to **dentists** in major cities versus the provinces.

For access in **emergencies**...

	Percentage of clinics that hold emergency appointments each day	Average number of emergency appointments held each day
National	64%	2.5
Major cities ¹	61%	2.0
Provinces ²	74%	3.5

1. Auckland, Waikato/Bay of Plenty, Wellington, Canterbury.
2. All other areas.

For access in **non-emergencies**...

	Percent of clinics that have an appointment on Monday	Percent of clinics that have an appointment next week	For the clinics that have no appointment next week, the average days to wait for...		Percentage of clinics taking on new patients
			... a consultation	... a treatment	
National	62%	87%	17	16	93%
Major cities ¹	67%	87%	13	13	94%
Provinces ²	51%	86%	26	24	92%

1. Auckland, Waikato/Bay of Plenty, Wellington, Canterbury.
2. All other areas.



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PRICE INCREASES

Fee Increases Dentists

New Zealand has recently experienced a period of relatively high inflation without commensurate wage growth. This has resulted in significant cost of living pressures across the country. While Statistics New Zealand measure inflation at the 'Dental Services' level, we saw the opportunity in this survey to question our members directly about their fee increases.

We asked whether members have increased fees in the last year. If so, by how much, and what were the main reasons. We also asked if members were intending to increase fees in the next year.

The survey found:

61%

... of dentists
increased their
fees last year

Recent size of the fee increase	
Average	3.7%
Lower Quartile	0.0%
Median	2.5%
Upper Quartile	5.0%
No. of replies	275



68%

... of dentists
intend to increase
fees next year

Intended size of the fee increase	
Average	3.6%
Lower Quartile	0.0%
Median	3.0%
Upper Quartile	5.0%
No. of replies	242

With the main reasons for increases being...

Inflation – the highest proportion of responses, at around one-third, mention inflation as the key reason for fee increases.

Increased cost of materials and consumables: Rising prices for dental materials, consumables, and equipment are frequently cited. This reason accounted for about 18% of responses.

Increased staff wages: Approx 15% of responses highlight the need to raise fees due to higher staff wages and wage demands.

Overhead costs: Increased costs related to rent, utilities, compliance, and general practice operations were mentioned in approximately 14% of responses.

Corporate decisions: About 10% of responses indicate that fee increases were mandated by corporate management.

Profitability concerns: Approximately 8% of responses mention the inability to make a profit as the main reason for fee increases.

Fee Increases Dental Specialists

When asking the same questions of the Dental Specialists, the survey found:

43%

... of dental specialists
increased their fees
last year

Recent size of the fee increase	
Average	2.3%
Lower Quartile	0.0%
Median	0.0%
Upper Quartile	5.0%
No. of replies	28

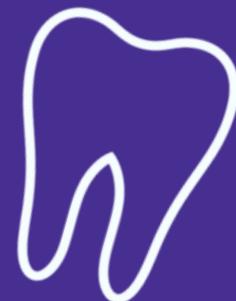


**With very similar reasons as those for Dentists
(see previous page)**

54%

... of dental specialists
intend to increase fees
next year

Intended size of the fee increase	
Average	3.3%
Lower Quartile	0.0%
Median	2.0%
Upper Quartile	5.0%
No. of replies	27



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APPENDIX TABLES
