

# New Zealand Museum Sector Web Survey

Prepared for Museums Aotearoa  
by  
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[www.nztri.org](http://www.nztri.org)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the second of the Museums Aotearoa (MA) barometer series – with a focus on staffing/labour issues in the sector. The survey was conducted over three weeks in November/December 2007.

Findings are analysed by museum “size”, defined according to the number of paid fulltime staff:

Micro museums 0  
Small museums 1-5  
Medium museums 6-20  
Large museums over 20

- Nearly 40% of museums surveyed have between 1 and 5 paid full-time employees (PFT).
- 42% of museums surveyed are micro museums employing no paid full-time staff.
- While paid part-time employees (PPT) are a common feature of the sector workforce, volunteers make a critical contribution, especially, but not solely, in smaller establishments.
- The workforce is a significant investment, with wages and salaries representing a major proportion of museums’ annual operating budgets.

- Higher level management are paid over \$70,000 in the medium and larger museums and even in some small museums, but generally salaries are modest.
- Operational and front of house staff have a more limited range of salaries with the bulk of full-time staff paid less than \$40,000.
- The range of salaries in the three other broad areas of responsibility analysed (functional or departmental management; technical or other specialists; and administration and support staff) exceed \$70,000 only in the medium and larger museums.
- Just over a third of museums surveyed offer benefits to their paid staff in addition to their basic remuneration.
- Fixed-term contracts are a feature of just under half of the museum surveyed, particularly among the larger and medium-sized museums' workforces.
- Staff retention rates are high, with nearly half the responding museums reporting no turnover in the past year among their paid staff, and almost a third recording less than 10%.
- Recruitment of paid staff can be a challenge, especially for medium-sized museums.
- Nearly half the museums report difficulties in recruiting volunteers, particularly micro museums.
- Fewer than half the museums surveyed have written policies, contracts or job descriptions for volunteers.
- Staff training and development vary across the range of participating museums, with larger museums providing more structured in-house training.
- Feedback on the barometer survey series is generally positive, with many museums continuing to be enthusiastic about the concept, and finding participation in the research to be worthwhile.