

TOI  **EDA**
Eastern Bay of Plenty Economic Development Agency

EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

JUNE 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents data indicating inequitable levels of engagement in education, training and employment for Eastern Bay of Plenty rangatahi and young people when compared to their age cohorts across the Bay of Plenty, and Aotearoa New Zealand. Over 70% identify as Māori.

Young people in the Eastern Bay have higher unemployment, lower median income, lower study participation, lower student retention, fewer school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above, and fewer school leavers enrolling in tertiary education.

Currently around 700 young people in the Eastern Bay receive Jobseeker Work-Ready Support while they look for work. This is equivalent to around 17%, or 1 in 5 of all young people aged 18-24.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on many sectors that employ young people, and there is evidence of ongoing effects including stubbornly high rates of young people receiving welfare benefits. There are significant risks that such disengagement will result in fewer opportunities and lower income and wealth over the lifetime of today's young generation, perpetuate the intergenerational effects already felt particularly by Māori in the Eastern Bay, and reduce the region's productivity potential.

The report highlights two urgent needs for improving youth employment and engagement in the Eastern Bay. Firstly, there is an urgent need to innovate and implement further targeted and effective interventions to address youth unemployment and disengagement in the region. Secondly, this report highlights a lack of timely indicators of youth employment and engagement, particularly at the sub-regional level.

This report focuses on the age range 15-24, noting that without early intervention the impacts of unemployment and disengagement can become embedded and affect older age groups.

CONTENTS

GLOSSARY	1
INTRODUCTION	2
KEY STATISTICS	2
EVIDENCE	3
CONTEXT INDICATORS	3
Population by age group	3
Young people’s ethnicity	4
Young people’s employment by industry	4
Young people’s employment by occupation	5
PRE-COVID KEY INDICATORS	7
Work and labour force status.....	7
Median income	8
Study participation.....	9
Student retention	11
School leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above	13
School leavers enrolled in tertiary education	14
POST-COVID KEY INDICATORS	16
Jobseeker Work-Ready Support.....	16
JSS Rate.....	18
RESULTS	19
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	20
CONTACT TOI EDA	21

Toi EDA is the Eastern Bay of Plenty’s Economic Development Agency. Our Mission is to ensure future generations have better opportunities and outcomes. A key focus area is workforce development, vital to enable both economic development and wellbeing. We gather and share workforce related information, to inform priority-setting, and contribute to monitor change, progress and learning.

For further information, see the Workforce Tab on our website at www.toi-eda.co.nz or contact:

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GLOSSARY

Measure	Description
Unemployment rate	Unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force. Note: Labour force includes employed and unemployed, excludes 'not in the labour force'. Source: Census.
Median income	The income amount that divides a population into two equal groups, i.e. half above and half below. Different from mean (or average) income as median is not unduly influenced by small number of very high incomes. Source: Census.
Study participation	Study participation in education or training including those attending or enrolled in school, tertiary institutions or any other place of education or training. Grouped into full-time study (20 hours or more a week), part-time study (less than 20 hours a week), and those not studying. Source: Census.
Student retention	Percentage of school leavers staying on at school to age 17. Source: Ministry of Education.
School leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above	Percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above (relative to all school leavers for the year). Source: Ministry of Education. Time series data compiled by Mayors Taskforce for Jobs.
School leavers enrolled in tertiary education	Percentage of school leavers enrolled in tertiary education in their first year after leaving (relative to all school leavers for the year). Tertiary education sector ranges from community education courses to trades training, apprenticeships and university qualifications. Source: Ministry of Education.
Jobseeker Work-Ready Support	Monthly JSS data (Work-Ready only, excludes Jobseeker Health Condition or Disability Support grants). Source: MSD.
JSS Rate	Quarterly JSS recipients aged 18-24 divided by population aged 18-24 years within each territorial authority (TA) and for New Zealand overall. Source: Mayors Taskforce for Jobs Youth Employment Dashboard.

INTRODUCTION

This report compiles data on youth employment and engagement in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The data focus is young people aged 15-24 or similar, where possible broken into smaller age categories. For some items only a broad measure is available, for example median income at the territorial authority level is reported for age group 15-29 only.

The report concludes with a call for planning and implementing more targeted and effective interventions to address youth unemployment and disengagement in the region, as well as looking at the potential for more timely local monitoring of youth wellbeing.

KEY STATISTICS

	Whakatāne	Kawerau	Ōpōtiki	Eastern Bay	Bay of Plenty	New Zealand
Unemployment rate for people aged 15-24 (2018)	19%	36%	23%	22%	15%	14%
Median income for people aged 15-29 (2018)	\$13,800	\$11,800	\$13,700	\$13,500	\$16,900	\$17,200
Study participation for people aged 15-24 (2018)	40%	38%	34%	39%	44%	50%
Student retention (2019)	76%	69%	63%	72%	76%	82%
School leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above (2019)	74%	64%	55%	69%	76%	79%
School leavers enrolled in tertiary education (2019)	47%	44%	45%	46%	54%	60%
Jobseeker Work-Ready Support for people aged 18-24 (Mar 2021)	368	215	133	716	3,295	n/a*
JSS Rate for people aged 18-24 (Mar 2021)	21%	29%	21%	22%	n/a**	10%

Note: * NZ data available online for the March 2021 quarter reports that, of the Jobseeker total (including both Work-Ready and Health Condition or Disability), 44,409 were aged 18-24. For all age groups combined, Work-Ready comprised 61% of total Jobseeker recipients. ** JSS Rate is available only at TA and national level from MTFJ Youth Employment Dashboard. An overall JSS Rate for Eastern Bay is also estimated here based on the population share of young people in each TA.



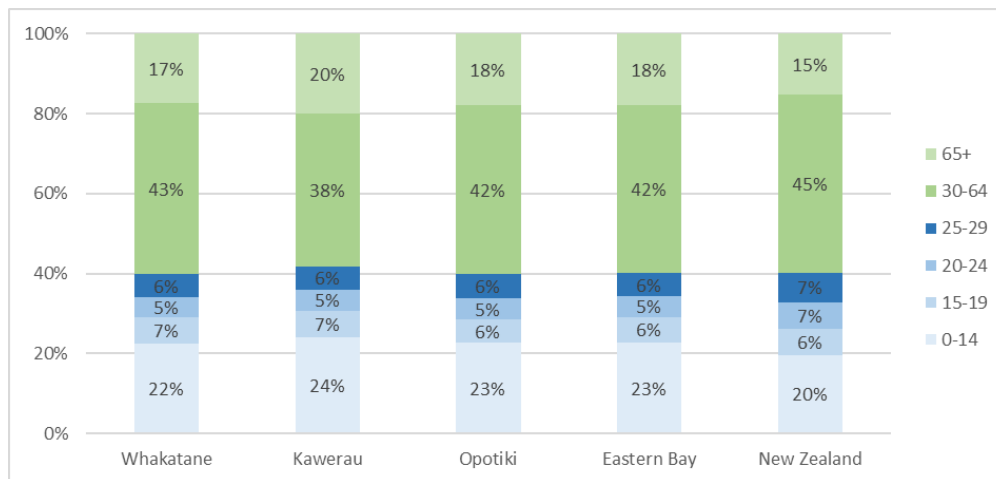
EVIDENCE

CONTEXT INDICATORS

Population by age group

As at Census night on Tuesday 6 March 2018, the Eastern Bay had a usually resident population of 52,122. Of these, 23% (11,826) were aged under 15 years and 12% (6,042) were aged 15-24 years. This compares with New Zealand overall where only 20% were aged under 15 years but 13% were aged 15-24 years.

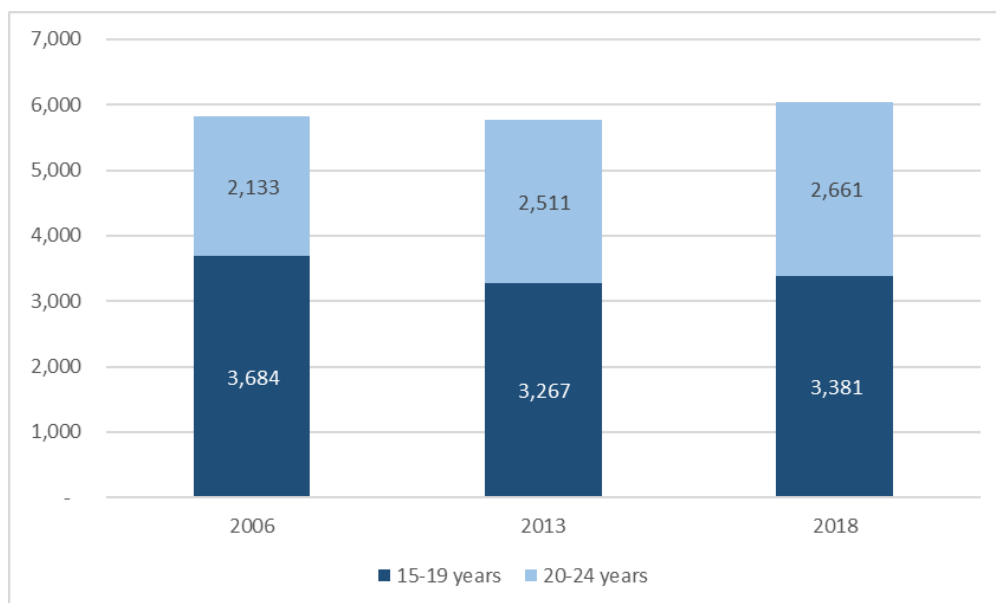
Figure 1: Usually resident population by age group (%), Eastern Bay and NZ, 2018 Census



Note: Columns may not sum due to rounding

The number of residents aged 15-19 decreased by around 300 between 2006 and 2018, but this was more than offset by an increase of over 500 residents aged 20-24. These population age profile changes are underpinned by a range of factors including changing birth rates over time and net overseas and internal migration.

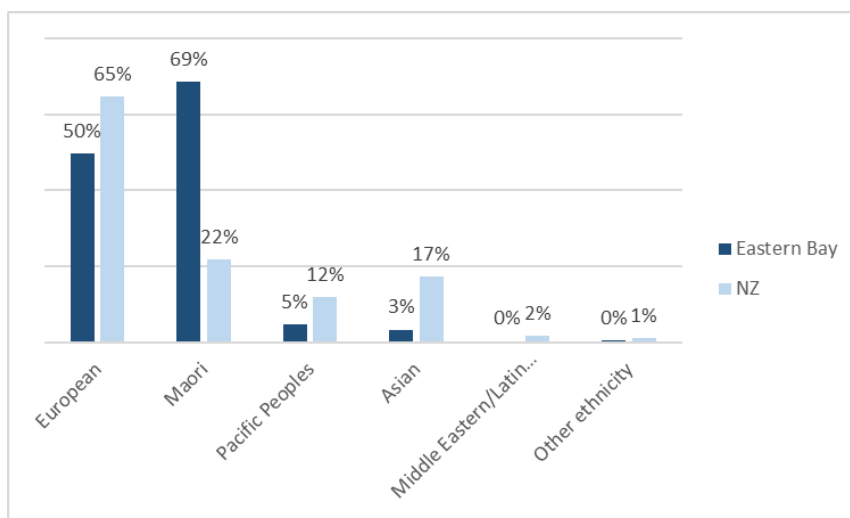
Figure 2: Usually resident population aged 15-24 in the Eastern Bay, 2006-2018



Young people's ethnicity

As at 2018, almost 70% of young people in the Eastern Bay identify as Māori, 50% European, 5% Pacific peoples and 3% Asian. The national average percentage Māori in this age group is 22%.

Figure 3: Ethnicity of Eastern Bay vs NZ young people aged 15-24, 2018



Note: Sums to more than 100% as respondents could choose multiple categories.

Young people's employment by industry

Key industries employing young people in the Eastern Bay include agriculture; food and beverage services; food retailing; agriculture, forestry and fishing support services; building cleaning, pest control and other support services; and construction services. These six industry subdivisions accounted for 43% of employment for Eastern Bay young people aged 15-29 in 2018.

Table 1: Employment by industry (subdivision) for Eastern Bay residents aged 15-29 as at 2018

	Percent	No.
Total people – industry	100%	5,067
Agriculture	11%	582
Food and Beverage Services	9%	438
Food Retailing	7%	330
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Support Services	6%	288
Building Cleaning, Pest Control and Other Support Services	6%	282
Construction Services	6%	279
Preschool and School Education	5%	273
Other Store-Based Retailing	5%	264
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3%	156
Medical and Other Health Care Services	3%	129
Building Construction	2%	123
Personal and Other Services	2%	123
Administrative Services	2%	114
Food Product Manufacturing	2%	99
Repair and Maintenance	2%	99
Wood Product Manufacturing	2%	93
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	2%	78

Notes: (1) Denominator is employed people aged 15-29 who stated their industry. (2) Lower level of aggregation (e.g. 15-19 year olds) is not available for smaller districts.

Young people's employment by occupation

Key occupations for young people in the Eastern Bay include farm, forestry and garden workers; sales assistants and salespersons; farmers and farm managers; other labourers; and hospitality workers. These five occupation groups accounted for 37% of employment for Eastern Bay young people aged 15-29 in 2018.

Table 2: Employment in main occupations (sub-major groups) for Eastern Bay residents aged 15-29 as at 2018

	Percent	No.
Total people – occupation		5,067
Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers	10%	516
Sales Assistants and Salespersons	9%	468
Farmers and Farm Managers	7%	342
Other Labourers	7%	336
Hospitality Workers	5%	231
Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers	4%	207
Factory Process Workers	4%	207
Carers and Aides	4%	204
Education Professionals	3%	168
Specialist Managers	3%	156
Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals	2%	114
Food Preparation Assistants	2%	114
Health Professionals	2%	108
Machine and Stationary Plant Operators	2%	108
Mobile Plant Operators	2%	108
Cleaners and Laundry Workers	2%	108
Construction Trades Workers	2%	105
Sales Support Workers	2%	105
Electrotechnology and Telecommunications Trades Workers	2%	102
Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers	2%	99
Sales Representatives and Agents	2%	99

Office Managers and Program Administrators	2%	90
Construction and Mining Labourers	2%	87
Sports and Personal Service Workers	2%	84

PRE-COVID KEY INDICATORS

Work and labour force status

Labour market statistics count people who are in paid employment, unemployed, and not in the labour force.

As at 2018, around 37% (2,262) of Eastern Bay young people were not in the labour force, for example because they were still attending school, undertaking a training course, or not employed and not seeking work. Almost one-third (30%) were employed full-time, and 18% employed part-time.

Excluding people not in the labour force, the Census 2018 unemployment rate for Eastern Bay young people aged 15-24 of 22%, similar to 2006 levels. The Eastern Bay unemployment rate was 25% for people aged 15-19 and 20% for people aged 20-24. Youth unemployment was highest for the 15-24 age group in Kawerau (36%) followed by Ōpōtiki (23%) and Whakatāne (19%). The national average was 14% for this age group.

Figure 4: Unemployment rate of Eastern Bay and NZ young people aged 15-24, 2018

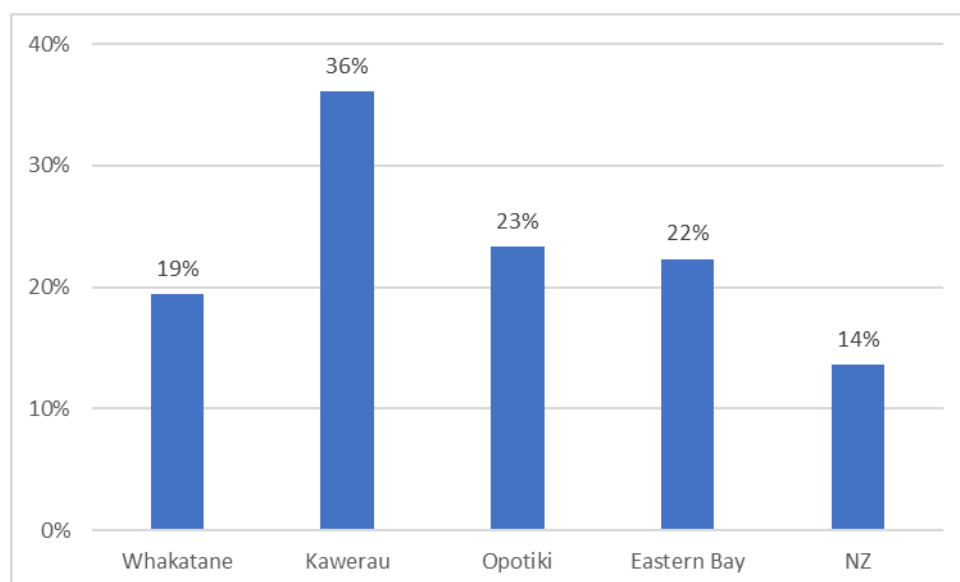
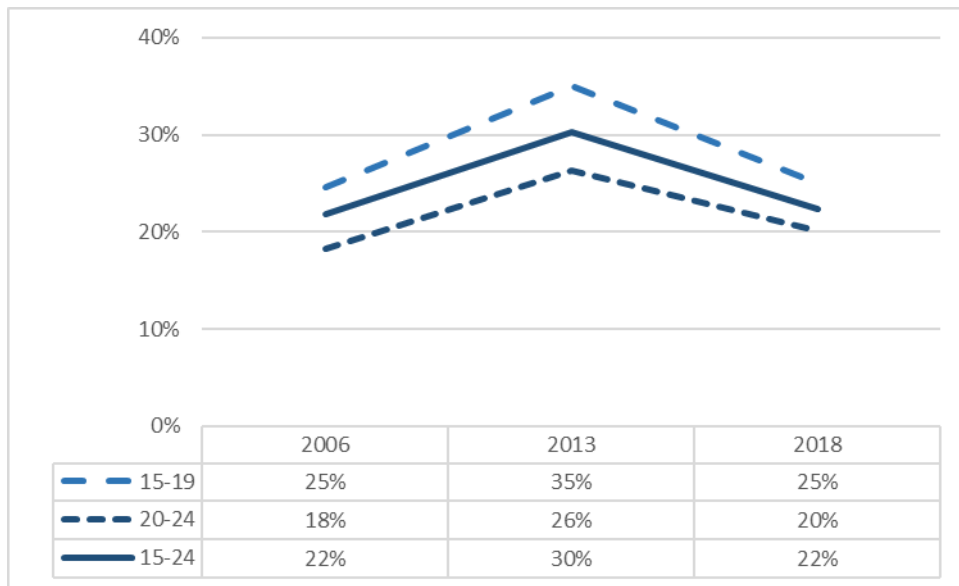


Table 3: Work and labour force status of Eastern Bay and NZ young people aged 15-24, 2018

	Whakatāne	Kawerau	Ōpōtiki	Eastern Bay
Employed Full-time	1,251	198	375	1,824
Employed Part-time	843	120	147	1,110
Unemployed	504	180	159	843
Not in the Labour Force	1,545	360	357	2,262
Total people stated	4,146	858	1,038	6,042

Note: Columns may not sum due to Statistics NZ's random rounding of Census outputs.

Figure 5: Unemployment rate for people aged 15-24 in the Eastern Bay, 2006-2018

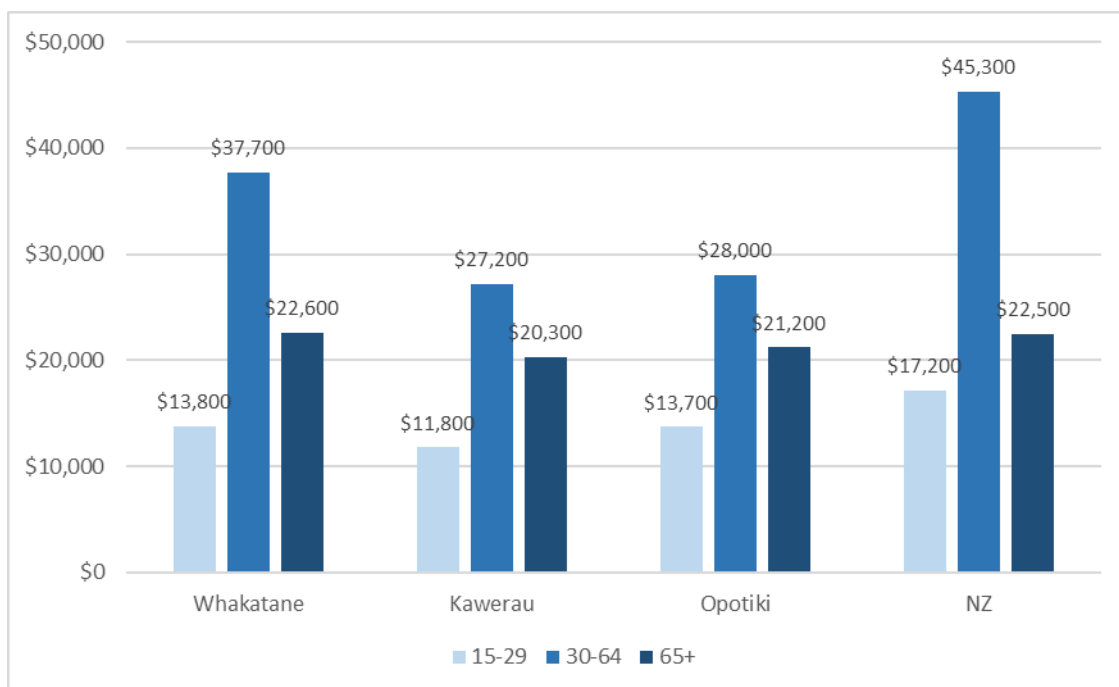


Median income

Income statistics give information about the money people get from employment and other sources. Income may be earnings from wages and salaries or self-employment. It can also come from government or other transfers, like benefits or investments.

Median personal income is lowest in younger age groups. For 15-29 year-olds in 2018, the median income in Whakatāne was \$13,800, Ōpōtiki \$13,700 and Kawerau \$11,800. On a population-weighted basis, this gives a median of \$13,500 for Eastern Bay young people overall, compared to \$17,200 national average for this age group.

Figure 6: Median personal income by age group, 2018



Study participation

Study participation data are grouped into full-time study (20 hours or more a week), part-time study (less than 20 hours a week), and those not studying.

A lower percentage of Eastern Bay residents aged 15 years and over were participating in full-time or part-time study in 2018 compared to the national average. Between 2006 and 2018, overall study participation declined as a percentage of the total population aged 15 and over, however this was partly driven by the impact of population ageing.

Looking just at the 15-24 age group, the 2018 Census recorded 36% in full-time study, 3% in part-time study and 61% not studying. This study participation of 39% for the Eastern Bay young people compared to 50% nationally.

Breaking this down further:

- For the younger age group 15-19 in the Eastern Bay, 59% were in full-time study, 3% in part-time study and 39% not studying; and
- For the older age group 20-24, 6% were in full-time study, 4% in part-time study and 90% not studying.

Figure 7: Study participation rates in Eastern Bay and NZ young people aged 15-24 as at 2018

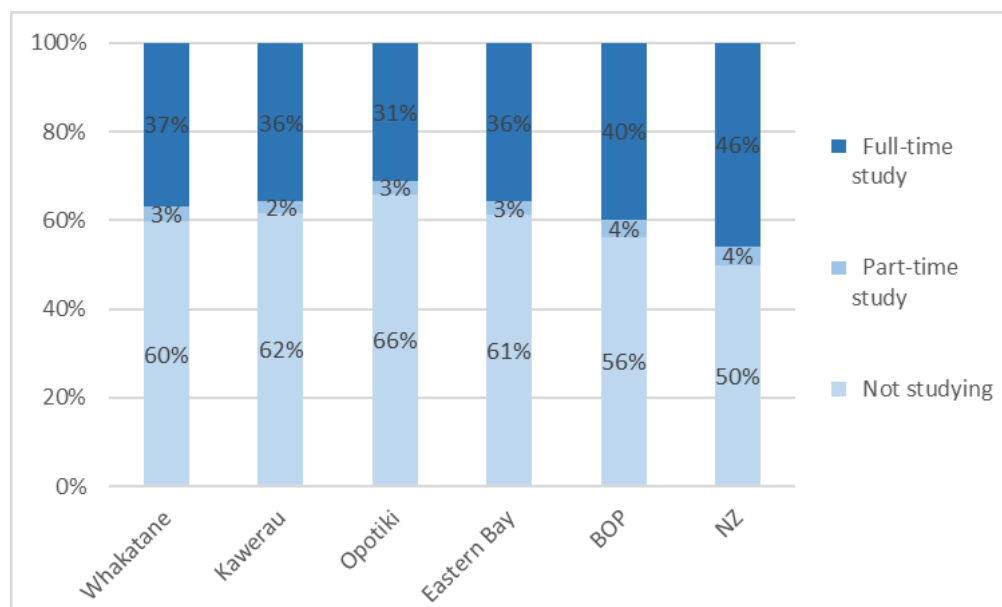
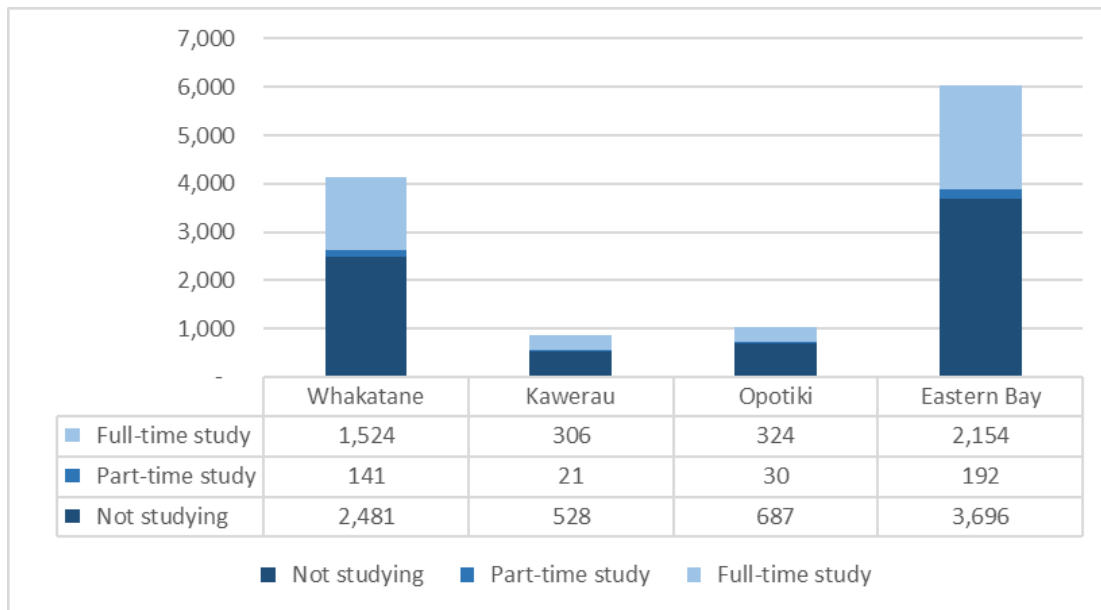
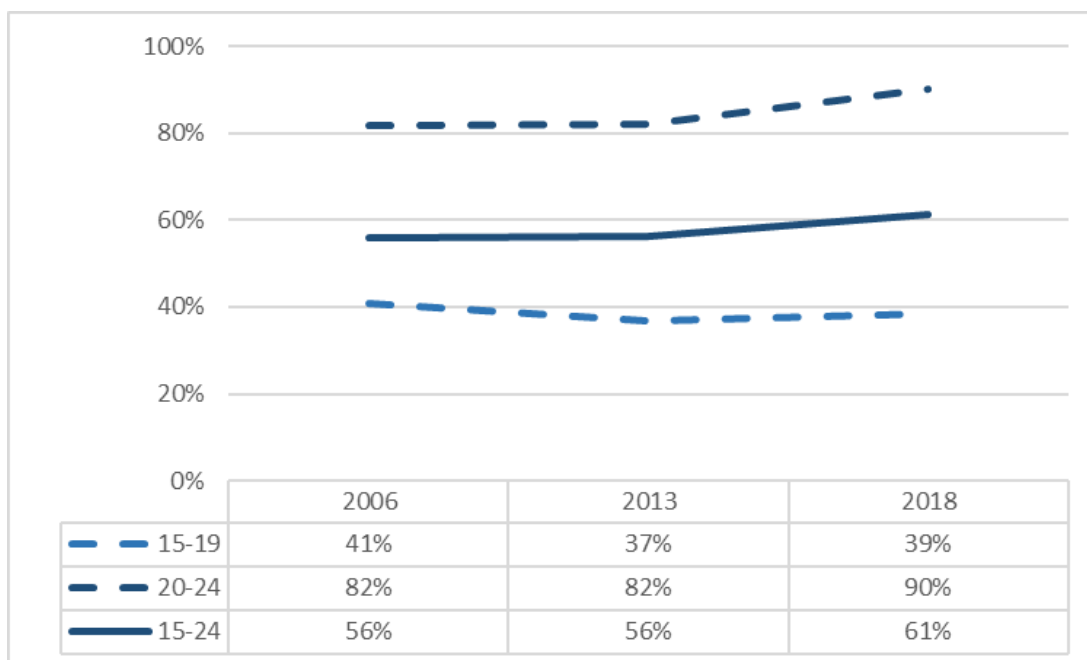


Figure 8: Study participation for Eastern Bay young people aged 15-24 as at 2018



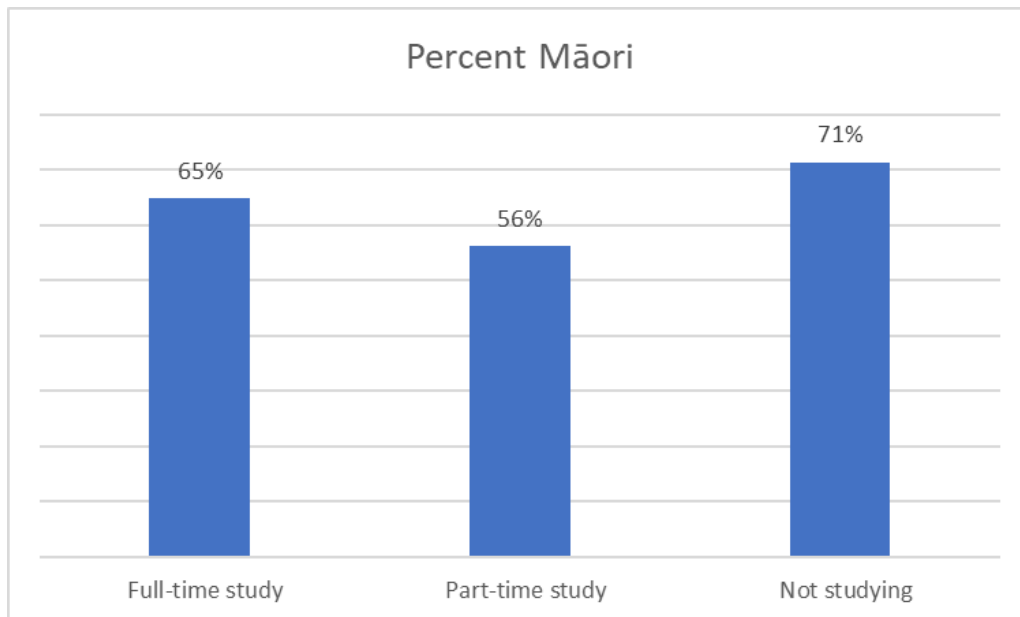
Over the period 2006 to 2018, the percentage of Eastern Bay young people aged 15-24 who were not studying increased from 56% to 61%. There was a slight decrease for young people aged 15-19, from 41% to 39%, but this was more than offset by an increased for young people aged 20-24, from 82% in 2006 up to 90% in 2018.

Figure 9: Percent of Eastern Bay young people aged 15-24 not studying, 2006-2018



As at 2018, Māori were under-represented amongst Eastern Bay young people who were studying and over-represented in the group that were not studying. In total 69% of respondents to this question were Māori but 71% 'not studying' were Māori.

Figure 10: Study participation for Eastern Bay young people aged 15-24 by ethnicity (Māori) as at 2018

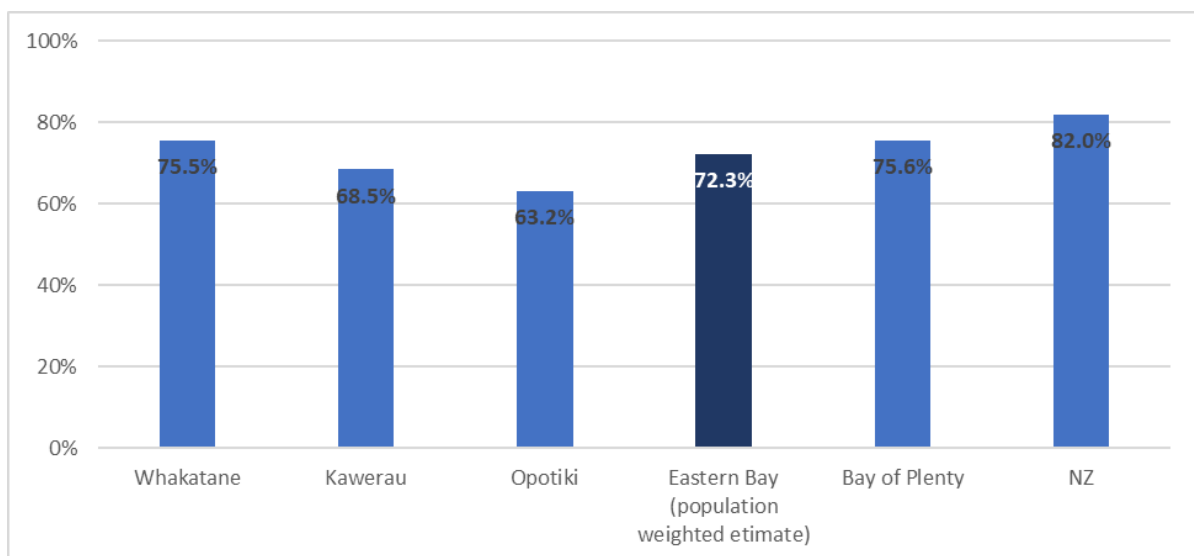


Student retention

Senior secondary education is associated with a range of economic and social benefits, including higher levels of skills and knowledge required for participation in our increasingly knowledge-based society.

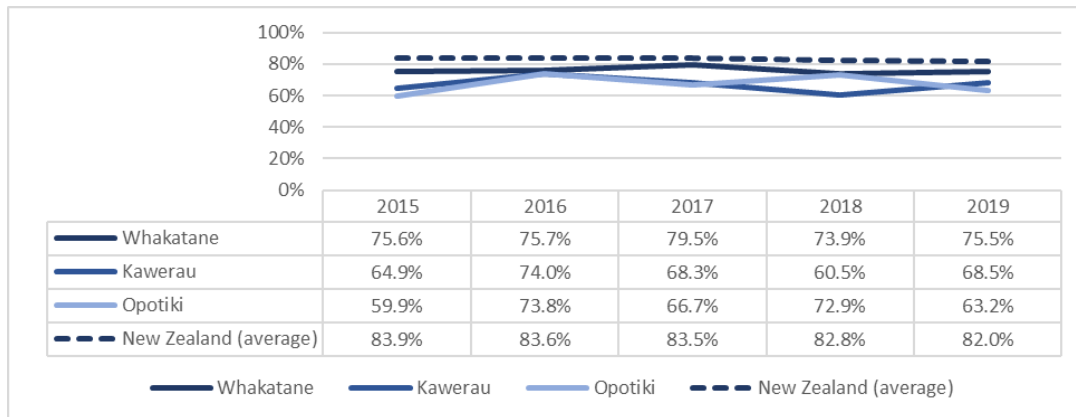
The percentage of school leavers who stay on at school to age 17 in the Eastern Bay is lower than the national average, particularly in Ōpōtiki and Kawerau.

Figure 11: Percentage of school leavers staying on at school to age 17 in 2019



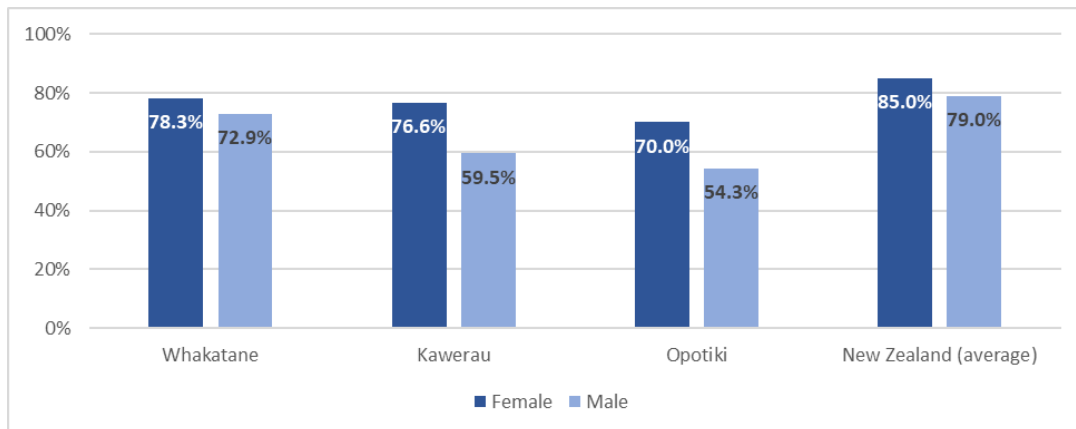
The percentage of school leavers staying on at school to age 17 has been declining at the national level. The percentage fluctuates from year-to-year at the territorial authority level.

Figure 12: Trend in percentage of school leavers staying on at school to age 17



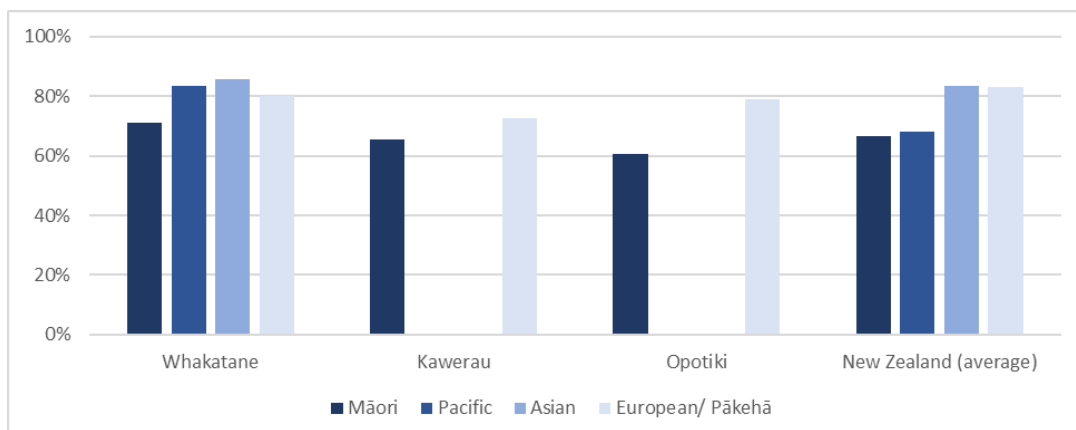
More females than males in the Eastern Bay stay at school to age 17.

Figure 13: Percentage of school leavers staying on at school to age 17 in 2019 by gender



In 2019, a lower percentage of Māori school leavers stayed on at school to age 17 compared to other ethnic groups.

Figure 14: Percentage of school leavers staying on at school to age 17 in 2019 by ethnic group



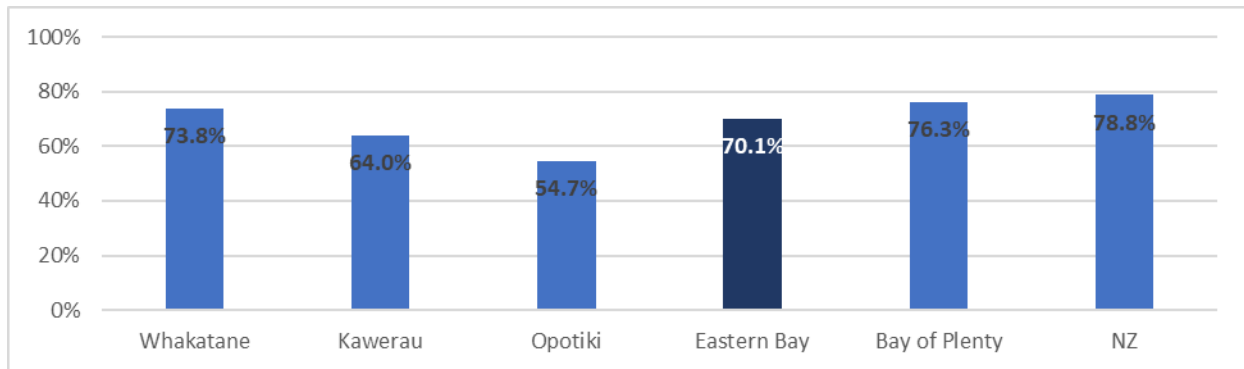
Notes: Respondents may select multiple ethnic groups. Data have been suppressed where there were less than 5 school leavers. Graph excludes Middle Eastern/Latin American/African and 'other' categories with small numbers.

School leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above

The National Certificate of Educational Achievement Level 2 (NCEA Level 2) serves as a foundation for further study and/or employment.

The percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above in the Eastern Bay is lower than the national average, particularly in Ōpōtiki and Kawerau.

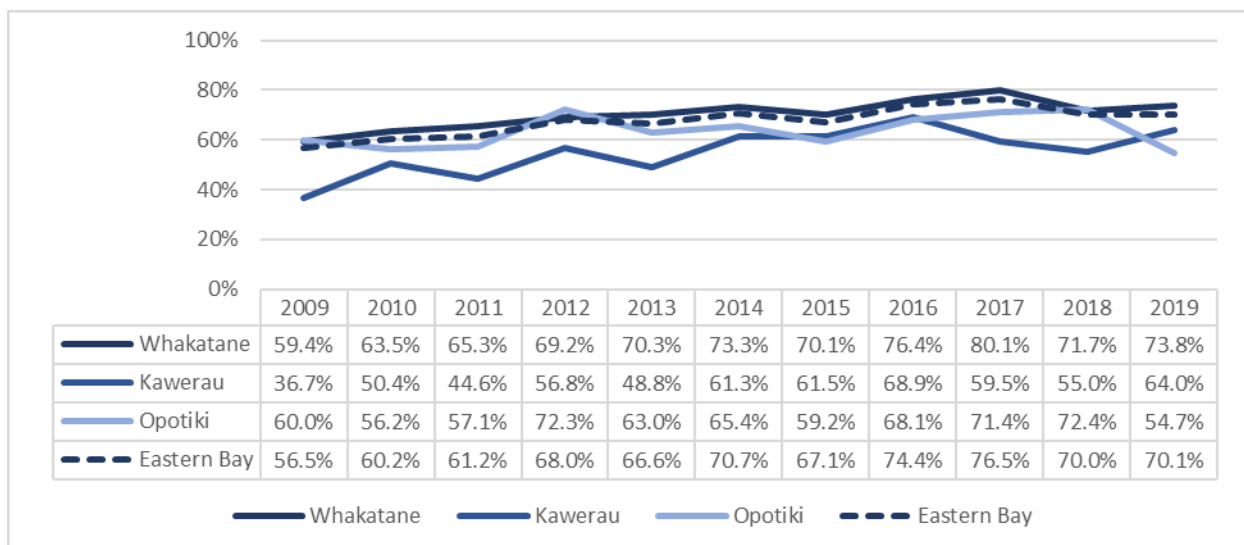
Figure 15: Percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above in 2019



Source: TA and Eastern Bay data from MTFJ Youth Employment Dashboard <https://www.mtfj.co.nz/youth-employment-dashboard/>; BOP and NZ data from Education Counts.

The percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 fluctuates from year-to-year at the territorial authority level.

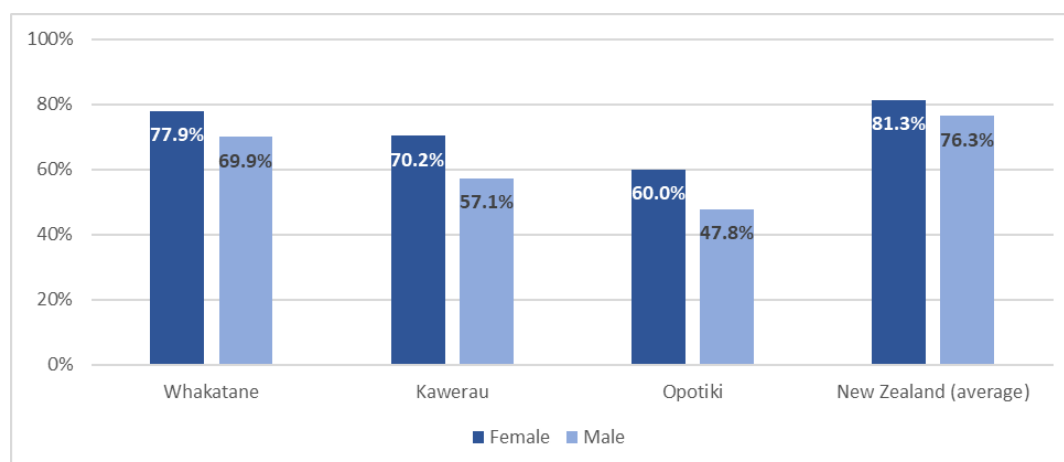
Figure 16: Trend in percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above



Source: Source: Data from MTFJ Youth Employment Dashboard

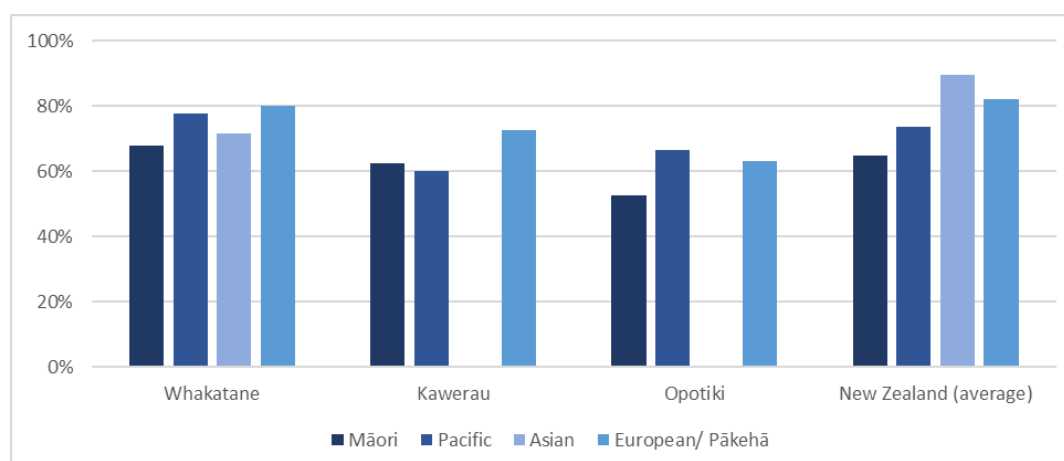
Similar to other parts of the country, more females than males in the Eastern Bay leave school with at least NCEA Level 2.

Figure 17: Percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above in 2019 by gender



In 2019, a lower percentage of Māori school leavers throughout the Eastern Bay attained NCEA Level 2 or above compared to other ethnic groups.

Figure 18: Percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above in 2019 by ethnic group



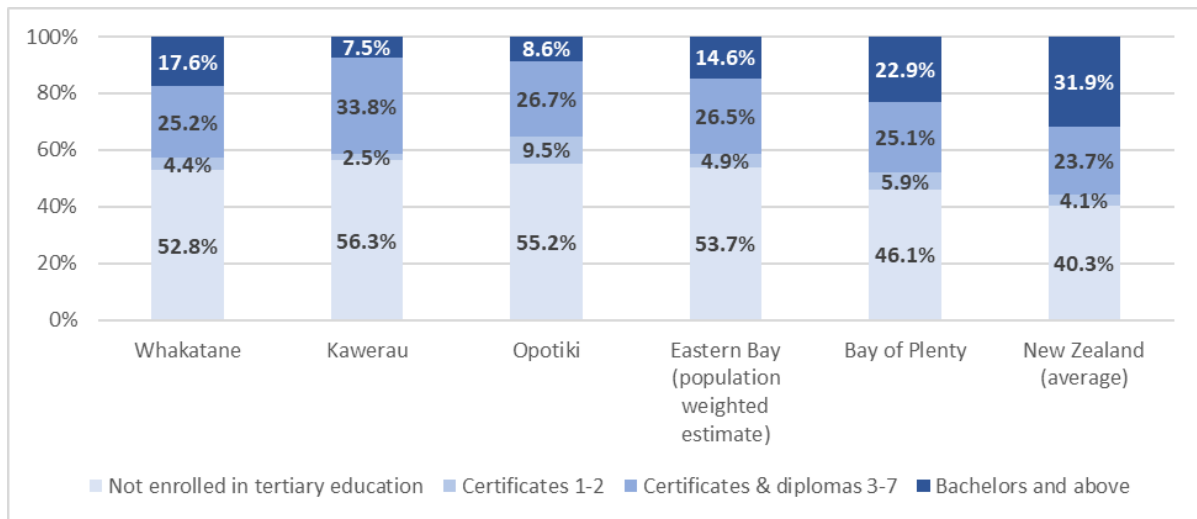
Notes: Respondents may select multiple ethnic groups. Data have been suppressed where there were less than 5 school leavers. Graph excludes Middle Eastern/Latin American/African and 'other' categories.

School leavers enrolled in tertiary education

The tertiary education sector is diverse, ranging from community education courses to trades training, apprenticeships and university qualifications. Enrolment in tertiary education indicates the extent to which New Zealanders are developing the skills needed for a modern knowledge economy and society.

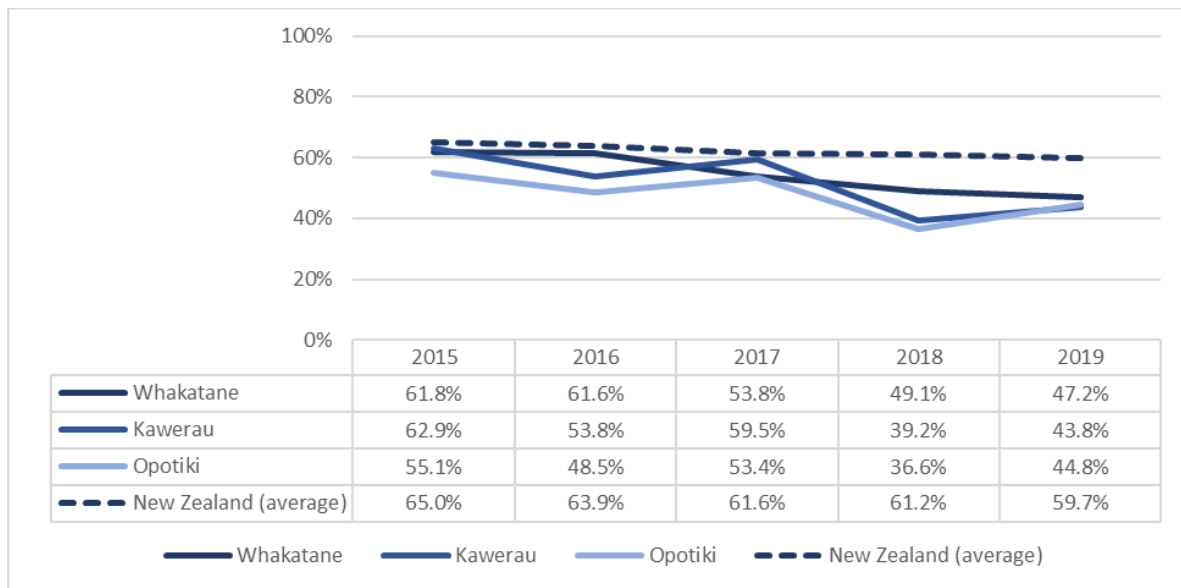
In 2019, the percentage of school leavers in the Eastern Bay enrolled in some form of tertiary education in their first year after leaving was lower than the national average, particularly in Ōpōtiki and Kawerau.

Figure 19: Percentage of school leavers by destination in 2019



The percentage of school leavers in the Eastern Bay who enrol in tertiary education (including industry training, apprenticeships, university courses, etc) has been decreasing in recent years, and at a faster rate than the national average.

Figure 20: Trend in school leavers enrolled in tertiary education, Eastern Bay of Plenty



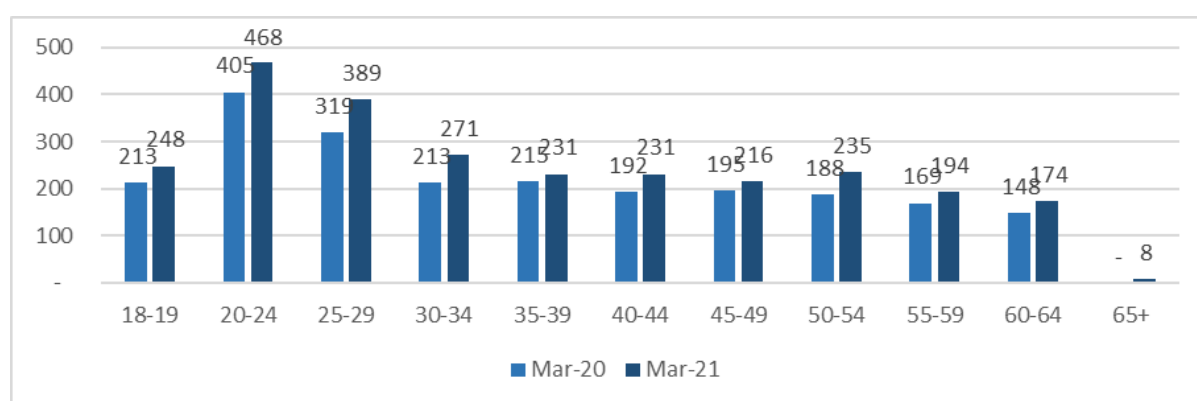
POST-COVID KEY INDICATORS

Jobseeker Work-Ready Support

Jobseeker Support is a weekly payment that helps people until they find work. It is available to people unemployed and looking for a job, people in part-time employment seeking more work, and people who have a health condition or disability which affects their ability to work.

The total number of Eastern Bay residents receiving Jobseeker Work-Ready Support (i.e. excluding Jobseeker Health Condition or Disability Support grants) remains relatively high but on a path to recovery. Latest data shows a year-on-year increase from 2,257 at the end of March 2020 to 2,665 in March 2021 (+18%). Much of the increase resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic and remained high throughout 2020 but is now starting to fall. There have been increases since last year across all age groups.

Figure 21: Jobseeker Work-Ready Support in Eastern Bay by age group



Latest data shows 716 young people aged 18-24 in the Eastern Bay on Jobseeker Work-Ready Support, comprising 248 aged 18-19, and 468 aged 20-24. Based on a 2018 Census usually resident population of approximately 4,200 in this age group, this represents around 17% of Eastern Bay young people receiving Jobseeker Work-Ready Support in March 2021.

Table 4: People receiving Jobseeker Work-Ready Support in Eastern Bay by age and service centre

	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Kawerau	71	144	121	212	213	61
Ōpōtiki	41	92	84	129	138	49
Whakatāne	136	232	184	392	294	72
Eastern Bay	248	468	389	733	645	182
Bay of Plenty	1,052	2,243	1,793	3,592	2,899	782

Figure 22: Trends in Eastern Bay young people receiving Jobseeker Work-Ready Support

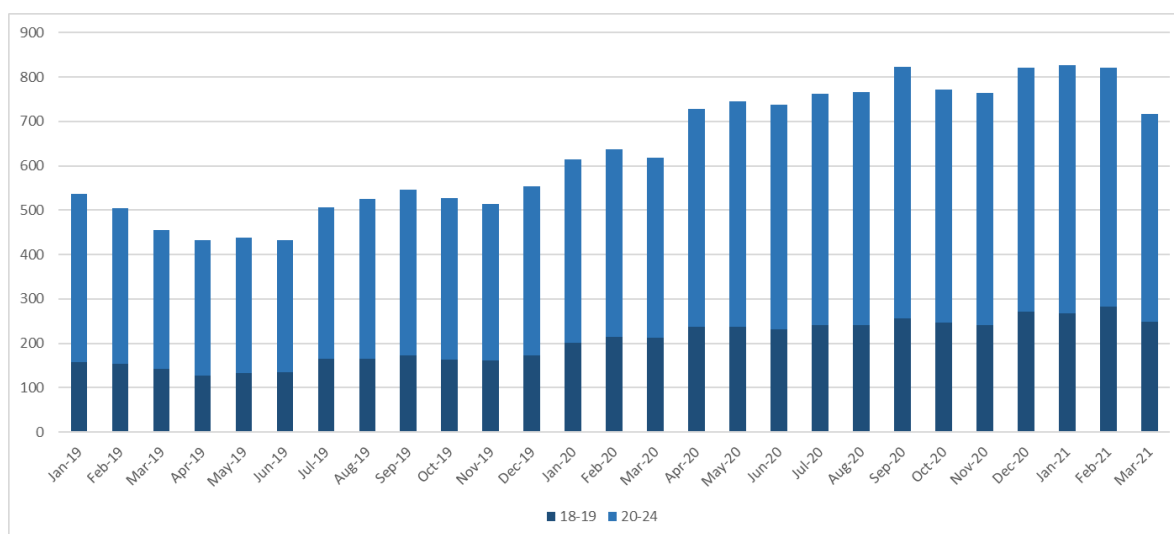


Table 5: Trends in Eastern Bay young people receiving Jobseeker Work-Ready Support by service centre

	Kawerau		Ōpōtiki		Whakatāne		Eastern Bay	
	18-19	20-24	18-19	20-24	18-19	20-24	18-19	20-24
Jan-19	58	139	20	57	80	182	158	378
Feb-19	62	124	15	57	77	170	154	351
Mar-19	53	102	12	46	77	165	142	313
Apr-19	49	98	7	43	72	163	128	304
May-19	51	104	9	38	73	163	133	305
Jun-19	50	105	11	50	73	143	134	298
Jul-19	64	117	23	54	79	170	166	341
Aug-19	59	127	24	51	83	181	166	359
Sep-19	62	133	23	53	88	188	173	374
Oct-19	61	120	18	56	85	187	164	363
Nov-19	56	113	16	55	89	186	161	354
Dec-19	63	119	19	57	91	205	173	381
Jan-20	81	131	19	60	102	222	202	413
Feb-20	82	135	23	66	109	223	214	424
Mar-20	80	119	19	58	114	228	213	405
Apr-20	86	141	27	75	124	276	237	492
May-20	81	150	30	75	127	282	238	507
Jun-20	72	153	35	79	124	275	231	507
Jul-20	84	160	40	94	118	266	242	520
Aug-20	82	159	50	98	109	269	241	526
Sep-20	82	167	56	109	118	291	256	567
Oct-20	81	158	52	105	113	263	246	526
Nov-20	81	154	43	106	117	264	241	524
Dec-20	90	167	46	111	136	271	272	549
Jan-21	93	166	44	117	131	275	268	558
Feb-21	92	159	51	119	140	260	283	538
Mar-21	71	144	41	92	136	232	248	468

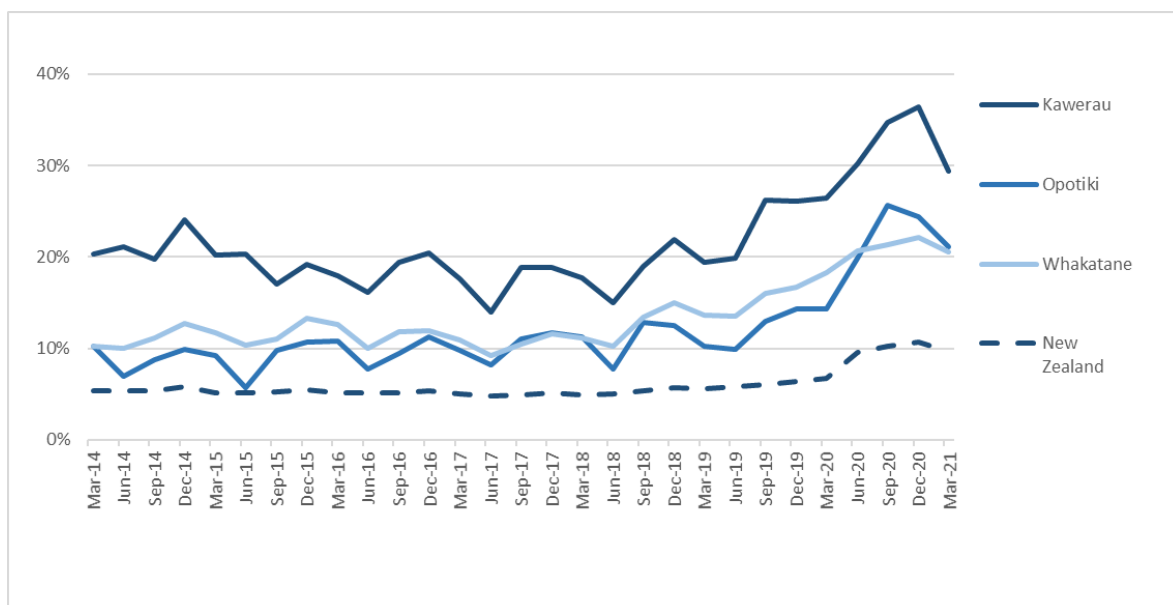
JSS Rate

JSS Rate is the quarterly number of Job Seeker Support recipients aged 18-24 divided by the population aged 18 to 24 within each territorial authority (TA) and for New Zealand overall. An overall JSS Rate for Eastern Bay is also estimated here based on the population share of young people in each TA. Data in this section includes Jobseeker Work-Ready and Health Condition or Disability Support grants.

The JSS Rate for the Eastern Bay overall has historically been in the range 10-15% in any given quarter, substantially higher than the approximately 5% national average. From around 2018 the JSS rate began rising at both the national and regional level, and this trend was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Latest figures for the March 2021 quarter show signs of recovery but the JSS Rate remains substantially above historical levels.

JSS Rate in the March 2021 quarter was highest in Kawerau (29.4%), followed by Ōpōtiki (21.1%) and Whakatāne (20.6%). The national average was 9.7%.

Figure 23: Trends in JSS rate



Source: Data from MTFJ Youth Employment Dashboard <https://www.mtfj.co.nz/youth-employment-dashboard/>

Table 6: Trends in JSS rate

	Kawerau	Ōpōtiki	Whakatāne	Eastern Bay	New Zealand
Mar-14	20.3%	10.2%	10.2%	11.6%	5.4%
Jun-14	21.1%	7.0%	10.0%	11.1%	5.4%
Sep-14	19.8%	8.8%	11.1%	11.9%	5.4%
Dec-14	24.1%	9.9%	12.7%	13.8%	5.8%
Mar-15	20.2%	9.2%	11.7%	12.5%	5.1%
Jun-15	20.3%	5.7%	10.4%	11.0%	5.1%
Sep-15	17.1%	9.8%	11.0%	11.7%	5.3%
Dec-15	19.2%	10.7%	13.3%	13.7%	5.5%
Mar-16	18.0%	10.8%	12.6%	13.1%	5.1%
Jun-16	16.1%	7.8%	10.0%	10.5%	5.1%
Sep-16	19.4%	9.4%	11.8%	12.5%	5.2%
Dec-16	20.4%	11.3%	12.0%	13.1%	5.4%
Mar-17	17.6%	9.8%	10.9%	11.7%	5.0%
Jun-17	14.0%	8.2%	9.2%	9.7%	4.8%
Sep-17	18.9%	11.0%	10.5%	11.8%	4.9%
Dec-17	18.9%	11.7%	11.6%	12.7%	5.1%
Mar-18	17.7%	11.3%	11.1%	12.1%	4.9%
Jun-18	15.0%	7.7%	10.2%	10.5%	5.0%
Sep-18	19.0%	12.9%	13.4%	14.1%	5.4%
Dec-18	21.9%	12.5%	15.0%	15.6%	5.7%
Mar-19	19.4%	10.2%	13.7%	13.9%	5.6%
Jun-19	19.9%	9.9%	13.5%	13.8%	5.8%
Sep-19	26.2%	13.0%	16.0%	16.9%	6.1%
Dec-19	26.1%	14.3%	16.7%	17.6%	6.4%
Mar-20	26.5%	14.3%	18.3%	18.8%	6.7%
Jun-20	30.2%	19.9%	20.7%	21.9%	9.6%
Sep-20	34.7%	25.6%	21.4%	24.0%	10.2%
Dec-20	36.4%	24.4%	22.2%	24.6%	10.7%
Mar-21	29.4%	21.1%	20.6%	21.9%	9.7%

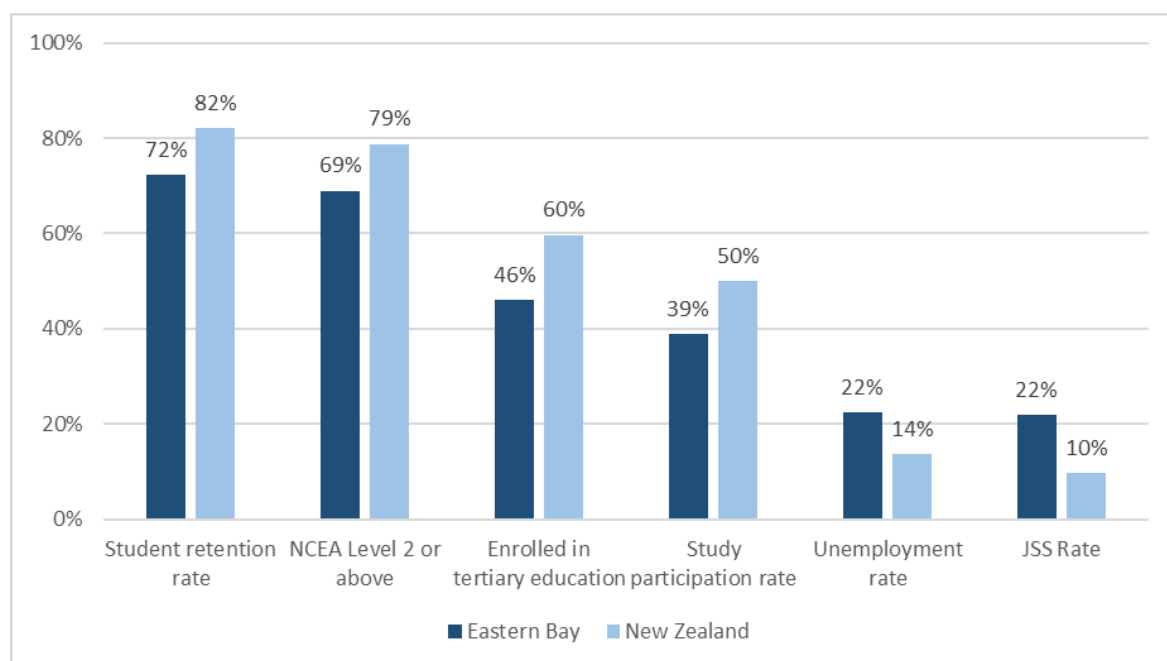
Source: TA and NZ data from MTFJ Youth Employment Dashboard;
Eastern Bay data estimated from TA data based on youth population share.

RESULTS

The results show adverse outcomes on every measure:

- For the 6,042 people aged 15-24 in the Eastern Bay, the 2018 Census unemployment rate was 22% compared to national average 14%.
- Median income for Eastern Bay young people aged 15-29 was around \$13,500 compared to national average \$17,200.
- Study participation of 15-24 year-olds was 39% for the Eastern Bay compared to national average 50%.
- Percentage of school leavers who stay on at school to age 17 in the Eastern Bay was 72% in 2019 compared to national average 82%.
- Percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 2 or above in the Eastern Bay was 69% compared to national average 79%.
- Percentage of school leavers who enrolled in some form of tertiary education in their first year after leaving was 46% in Eastern Bay compared to national average 60%.
- Currently around 700 young people aged 18-24 in the Eastern Bay are receiving Jobseeker Work-Ready Support while they look for work.
- The JSS Rate for Eastern Bay young people aged 18-24 is around 22% compared to national average 10%.

Figure 24: Summary of data findings (percentage measures)



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on many sectors that employ young people, and there is evidence of ongoing effects including stubbornly high rates of young people receiving welfare benefits in the Eastern Bay. There are serious risks that such disengagement will not only result in fewer opportunities and lower income and wealth over the lifetime of today’s young generation, but also have flow-on effects for generations to come. Without more avenues for engagement, the region’s economy will continue to miss the contribution of nearly 20% of the youthful cohort.

Recent government investment via the Provincial Development Unit and the Ministry of Social Development into iwi and community-led youth engagement and employment initiatives were welcome. The COVID-19 recovery initiatives which targeted both Māori and rangatahi employment assisted with refining youth employment initiatives to employment opportunities in a much more disciplined manner.

As the Eastern Bay economy recovers and grows, including as a result of the growing Māori economy and Provincial Fund investments in each District, new job and career opportunities are opening up. Improvements to vocation and career focussed information and services at school and tertiary levels, and in youth employment programmes are vital. Currently no government agency appears responsible to ensure that educators are regularly informed and updated about the economy and trends in employment and job opportunities at a regional level.

It is important to understand rangatahi and youth aspirations, and their current awareness and confidence about job and career pathways, particularly in their own regions. Toi EDA’s 2021 Youth Survey will explore this among 15-19 year old school students in the Eastern Bay.

Industry and businesses have an important role to play, but apart from apprenticeship data, there are no national information sets tracking their initiatives, or trends in recruiting and retaining rangatahi and young people.

Quality information matters. The report highlights a lack of timely indicators of youth employment and engagement, particularly at the sub-regional level. Administrative data on young people already held by agencies could potentially be reported or shared to support both local and broader planning for youth engagement and employment initiatives. For example data and information on youth transitions as they leave school is not readily available. Similarly regional information about young people on unsupported benefits, youth payments and young parent payments has not been made available.

The rate of participation, and completion of trade training and apprenticeship by vocation, age, and by District or sub region is not available. Similarly there is a lack of quality, regular information tracking what employment and vocationally pertinent secondary and tertiary education courses are funded within each District, or the Eastern Bay region, or the rates of participation and completion by students, by age cohort.

The Eastern Bay needs all of it's rangatahi and young people to thrive and contribute as citizens. They are the future leaders of communities, whānau and families, and industry. Engagement in education, training and employment are important enablers to this.

CONTACT TOI EDA

Toi EDA is a regional economic development trust supported by the three Eastern Bay of Plenty Councils and the Regional Council. Workforce Development is a cornerstone focus of the Trust. To date this activity has been funded mainly by philanthropy and in particular we acknowledge the Todd Foundation and the Bay of Plenty Education Trust.

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