# **Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework**

**Report on primary student and staff consultation** - TOPLINE REPORT DEC 2022 -







## BACKGROUND

The Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework aims to guide, develop, and implement actions that will enable all students to thrive in a supportive and inclusive environment that enhances their wellbeing and safety. To inform the development of the framework, we invited students and staff to tell us what they thought the University is doing well in supporting student wellbeing, and what can be improved.

The working definition of wellbeing which the Framework will be based on is:

"Wellbeing is a state of dynamic equilibrium in which we have the psychological, social, and physical resources we need to nurture Mauriora (cultural and spiritual identity), Waiora (physical environment), Toiora (healthy lifestyles), Taha Whānau (family health) and Te Oranga (participation in society), and as a result, lead fulfilling lives with Ngā Manukura (leadership) and Te Mana Whakahaere (autonomy).

At Te Herenga Waka, this means that we actively address the diverse needs of our community and cultivate a culture and environment that enables all students to thrive, and to achieve in their academic, and personal potential."

This report presents the findings of the initial student and staff consultation to inform the development of a Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework. Quantitative and qualitative information was gathered through a student survey on enhancing wellbeing, a staff survey on enhancing student wellbeing, and student focus groups to explore the issues and solutions in greater depth.

The project team is mindful of the interconnectedness of staff and student wellbeing and that many staff are also students. While the Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework is focused on student wellbeing, Human Resources will soon commence leading a dedicated project to produce a staff wellbeing framework.

In presenting these findings, the Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework project team acknowledges the significant strengths that Te Herenga Waka already has in supporting the wellbeing of students. We recognise that responding to the opportunities and solutions identified should not rest with just one part of our community and that work may already be underway to address them. Many of the issues raised are interconnected and our hope is that the process of developing the Framework, and the Framework itself, will assist with our community conversations to collectively own and respond to these challenges.

In presenting these findings, we acknowledge the significant strengths Te Herenga Waka already has in supporting the wellbeing of students. We recognise that responding to the opportunities identified should not rest with just one part of our community; many of them are interconnected. It is our hope that the process of developing the Framework, as well as the Framework itself, will assist our community conversations to collectively own and respond to these opportunities.

We acknowledge the work that is already underway to address several of the opportunities to enhance student wellbeing that students and staff have identified. Ensuring there is a strong connection between existing frameworks, projects, and plans such as Mai i te Iho ki te Pae, Pasifika Student Success Plan, Ngā Kīwai o te Kete — Student Engagement Framework, Sustainability Outcomes Framework, Learning and Teaching Plan, Paerangi—Student Success Framework, and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework will be vital to ensuring the success of the Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework. We hope these findings enrich the understanding of the impact that existing initiatives can have on student wellbeing as well as providing a challenge to go further.

The project team will now bring together the findings from this primary consultation, existing Te Herenga Waka wellbeing information, advice from student and staff leadership, advice from wellbeing experts, research, and exemplars, to develop the Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework. This process will honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and follow a culture of respectful engagement. Students and staff will be invited to further contribute via formal consultation.

We welcome your response to these findings, any questions you have, or expertise that you would like to share, email **wellbeingframework@vuw.ac.nz** 

Further information and the project team can be found here: https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/support/pastoral-care-code/wellbeing-outcomes-framework

## METHODOLOGY

## SURVEYS

The student and staff survey questions were developed by the Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework team. They were informed by wellbeing research, exemplars, and a review of existing Te Herenga Waka student wellbeing findings.

In answering the survey questions, students and staff were invited to consider how wellbeing is supported by Te Herenga Waka policy, culture, teaching and learning, accommodation, services, systems, technology, attitudes, physical environment, systems, practices, ways of working, and COVID-19 response.

The Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework team received advice from the Survey Manager, Vice Chancellor's Office.

A webpage for the Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework was established, where background information and a link to the survey were published. Students and staff members were also invited to contribute further ideas or share their wellbeing expertise.

#### STUDENT SURVEY

The student survey was implemented via Qualtrics, a web-based online survey tool. The survey was available for two weeks, and 495 individuals responded.

The survey was published on 10 August and closed on 24 August 2022. This window coincided with the mid-trimester break, which allowed students more time to thoroughly answer the survey questions. This timeframe was chosen to avoid conflicting with the Student Voice—Have Your Say survey and other surveys promoted by the University.

The survey was advertised through the student newsletter Whītiki, emails, social media channels such as Instagram and Facebook, and via student services and representative groups. All students new in the second trimester of 2022 were sent an email invitation with a link to complete the Help Us to Enhance Wellbeing at Te Herenga Waka Survey.

As poor wellbeing can disproportionately impact students from diverse backgrounds and members of the University's named equity groups, we specifically promoted the survey through equity services (including Āwhina, Pasifika Student Success,

Te Amaru—Disability Services, Manawa Ora—Student Wellbeing, Te Haumiri— International Student Experience and the Rainbow and Inclusion and Refugee Background Student Advisers), and student representatives.

### STAFF SURVEY

Similarly, the staff survey was implemented via Qualtrics. The survey was available for four weeks, and a total number of 171 individuals responded to the survey questions. The survey was published on 17th August and closed on 7 September 2022. This initial timeframe was extended to garner as many responses as possible.

The survey was advertised through University News and managers were sent an email invitation with a link to complete the Help Us to Enhance Student Wellbeing at Herenga Waka Survey.

The participant demographics for both the staff and student surveys are outlined in the appendix.

## FOCUS GROUPS

In focus groups, students were asked to respond to the working definition of wellbeing and engage in a deeper discussion about what the University is doing well in supporting student wellbeing, and what needs improving.

Focus groups were conducted between 26 August and 16 September 2022 with Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association, Postgraduate Students' Association, and the Student Assembly with representatives from STUDiO, Tutors' Network, Ngā Rangahautira, UniQ, Post Graduate Students' Association, VICcom, Disabled Students' Association, Asian Law Students' Association, V-ISA International Students Association, Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association, and the Victoria University Engineering Club attended.

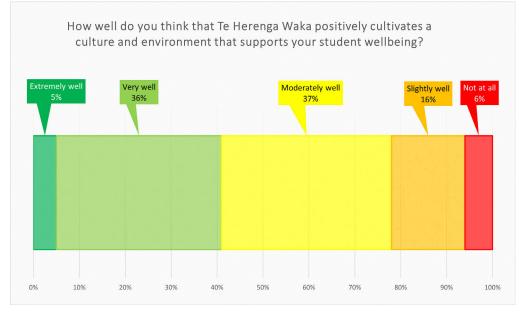
## ANALYSIS

The qualitative data gathered from the surveys and focus groups was analysed thematically. Under each question, individual responses were coded with a key theme or multiple key themes. They were further coded as positive, neutral or negative when needed. Pivot tables and bar graphs were created to establish top themes and identify patterns and trends.

# RESULTS

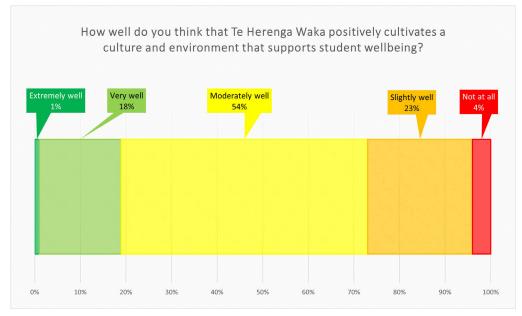
# STUDENT AND STAFF PERCEPTION OF HOW WELL TE HERENGA WAKA POSITIVELY CULTIVATES A CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS STUDENT WELLBEING

Students tended to assess the support of student wellbeing facilitated by the culture and environment of Te Herenga Waka as positive.



41% of the 495 students who responded think that Te Herenga Waka cultivates a culture and environment that supports student wellbeing extremely well (5%) or very well (36%). 37% of students selected moderately well. 22% of students responded negatively, selecting either slightly well (16%), or not at all (6%).

The majority of staff assessed the support of student wellbeing facilitated by the culture and environment of Te Herenga Waka as moderate.



19% of the 171 staff who responded think that Te Herenga Waka cultivates a culture and environment that supports student wellbeing extremely well (1%) or very well (18%). 54% of staff selected moderately well. 27% of staff responded negatively, selecting either slightly well (23%), or not at all (4%).

## **KEY INSIGHTS**

This section describes some of the key insights gained from the student survey, staff survey and student focus groups. The ten insights are ordered by the combined student and staff quantity and strength of responses, with the strongest response first.

	Key Insights
1	Reaffirm and strengthen the wellbeing culture and community of Te Herenga Waka
2	Embed wellbeing into teaching and learning design and delivery
3	Uphold and enhance highly regarded student services
4	Accept, acknowledge, and celebrate identity
5	Respond to post-pandemic expectations of course flexibility, remote access, and sustainable workloads
6	Recognise the interconnectedness of staff wellbeing and student wellbeing
7	Establish wellbeing as a core component of our plans, policies, decisions, and systems
8	Address campus and city safety
9	Influence students' cost of living
10	Understand and act on climate change

## 1. REAFFIRM AND STRENGTHEN THE WELLBEING CULTURE AND COMMUNITY OF TE HERENGA WAKA

Students and staff value our wellbeing culture and community and want this further strengthened.

## STRENGTHS

Promotion and encouragement of positive wellbeing strategies, a culture of sharing how we feel, many approachable staff, the range of support that is available, incorporating student and staff wellbeing and the needs of those at high risk into our COVID-19 response, our commitment to equity and diversity, the visibility of Māori, Pasifika and multicultural events and initiatives, and the richness of the wellbeing and diversity expertise we have in our community.

"The environment at campus is incredibly warm and welcoming which always makes me comfortable to be there. Also, any staff member that I have ever approached has been really friendly and helpful which gives me confidence in the university in general." (Student)

#### OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

Students and staff called for a stronger sense of community, particularly for our community to be more united and less fragmented. They want to have confidence that they are working towards shared goals and values.

Some students spoke about experiencing loneliness and disconnection from their peers, even when in the same room.

Whether online or in person, students particularly wanted to see open discussions about wellbeing, and more facilitated opportunities to establish meaningful, positive connections, such as wellbeing events in the Hub and in communal spaces at Pipitea and Te Aro.



Photo credit: Image Services

"VUW has built a reputation over time for leading in this space with wellestablished support services and strong messaging around inclusivity. Recent improvements to supporting academic support driven by the pastoral care code have shown up where we were lacking. Positive improvements are being made in this space." (Staff member)

## 2. EMBED WELLBEING INTO TEACHING AND LEARNING DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Students and staff see a need to embed wellbeing into the fabric of Te Herenga Waka through teaching and learning. Students viewed academic staff as representing Te Herenga Waka, and therefore, if they model and incorporate wellbeing into their course design and delivery this has a significant impact on students.

#### STRENGTHS

The significant positive impact academic staff can have when they are compassionate, inclusive, and encouraging; the high level of respect students generally have for academic staff; and the high value students place on deepening their understanding of wellbeing and how it relates to their studies.

"The teachers are available to help us with academic and personal potential. We have discussions when starting the course about our goals and the drop-in sessions every week to be consulted. We also have many chances to practice during the course with classmates under teachers' instruction and our own speaking partners. We have the librarians ready to support. We are well-facilitated." (Student)

#### **OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS**

In-course promotion of wellbeing literacy and the support that is available (supported by student services); seizing opportunities to incorporate wellbeing into course content where there is a useful connection with the discipline; building a sense of community between students within courses; greater support for academic staff responding to students whose wellbeing is languishing; decisions about teaching and learning to ensure any impact on wellbeing is considered.

"...Careful consideration of how well-being initiatives can be woven into teaching, rather than having classes and support on an opt-in basis. The more engrained wellbeing is into the educational content the university provides, the better the students will be inside and outside of their education..." (Staff member)



Photo credit: Image Services

## 3. UPHOLD AND ENCHANCE HIGHLY REGARDED STUDENT SERVICES

Students and staff lauded the range and quality of student support services, had high expectations of them, and highlighted the importance of having readily available mental health support.

## STRENGTHS

Students highlighted the difference specific student services had made to them at crucial moments and spoke passionately about the value of the meaningful connections they had made with empathetic and professional student services staff. They enjoyed getting to know staff, trusted them, and felt they had made a transformative difference at a key time. There were many positive comments about all services. Students also took heart from knowing there was quality support for equity, diversity and wellbeing services even if they did not need them themselves. Many staff and students identified that University Recreation, Wellington is a valuable and sometimes overlooked service.

"There are tons of services that ensure we take care of our wellbeing, and often it is not just when we join these specific services but also the people we meet while doing other activities along the way." (Student)

#### OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

Both students and staff wanted to ensure that student mental health support was available in a reasonable timeframe as delays could be stressful. Academic and professional staff wanted to see a closer connection between academic staff and student services. Academic staff welcomed more advice, expertise and support from student services colleagues regarding wellbeing. Professional staff wanted to be more involved in the academic mission of the University. Staff and students wanted greater visibility of student services, better post-graduate support and for there to be a presence at Te Aro campus. Suggestions to magnify the impact of University, Recreation, Wellington included stronger connection with the rest of the University, and more promotion of physical fitness, clubs and recreation events as beneficial to the physical, social, mental aspects of wellbeing.



Photo credit: Image Services

"...the lack of well-being and health support... are negative influences for students." (Student)

## 4. ACCEPT, ACKNOWLEDGE, AND CELEBRATE IDENTITY

Students and staff viewed the acceptance, acknowledgement, understanding and celebration of identity as vital to flourishing wellbeing and spoke to the damaging impacts of discrimination, which can occur at University.

## STRENGTHS

The willingness and openness of staff to deepen their understanding of Māori, Pasifika, English as a Second Language, Rainbow, and disability identity and needs; their awareness of how having a rich understanding of identity and how to teach inclusively positively impacts staff-student relations; the commitment of the University to equity and diversity and providing a discrimination-free environment for all members of the University community.

"Honestly, they're doing a pretty good job, it's been good to see some Pasifika and Māori representation over the past few months, like the Pasifika exhibition last week and the Kapa Haka group. And my lecturers and tutors have been good about including and respecting everyone." (Student)

#### OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

Prioritising a diverse staff, promoting existing diverse staff, strengthening the leadership of equity and diversity at the University, recognising and celebrating our multicultural and diverse community, the introduction of mandated professional development for staff which would inherently up skill them and empower them to both meet the needs of diverse students and to take action in response to discriminatory behaviour.

"This needs to start from the top. Perhaps more support/education for academic and professional staff about the needs and challenges faced by equity groups (Rainbow, students with Disabilities, Māori and Pasifika) should be mandated professional development." (Staff member)



Photo credit: Image Services

# 5. RESPOND TO POST-PANDEMIC EXPECTATIONS OF COURSE FLEXIBILITY, REMOTE ACCESS, AND SUSTAINABLE WORKLOADS

There was frequent mention of high course workload and assessment clusters as hindering student wellbeing; remote course access and flexible approaches were greatly valued.

## STRENGTHS

A heightened staff awareness of the pressures many students faced balancing their University commitments with a need to work due to the cost of living; an understanding from both staff and students of how assessment clusters can create wellbeing issues; the rapid development of new technological skills by staff to deliver digital content; and increased University capability for digital teaching delivery including Nuku.

"Ensure courses are focused on accommodating students i.e. no mandatory in person tests, live zooms of lectures, well-detailed lecture slides. This would support well-being and allow students flexibility around stressful parts of semester."

(Student)

## OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

Course workload expectations, deadlines and extensions which consider individual students' contexts including wellbeing, equity needs, employment and whānau obligations and don't require medical and extraordinary circumstances as requirements; prevent over assessing students and assessment clusters where possible; greater accessibility to be consistently embedded in courses and course material. Many students expressed a need to access their courses remotely at times; this was particularly important for students with disabilities, offshore students, student with work and whānau commitments.



Photo credit: Image Services

"...In terms of teaching not enough is done to manage students' workloads, such as communication within and across departments to ensure students are not overloaded with assessments. In my recent experience as a student, I feel as though students are over assessed, and when taking into consideration that students have commitments to whānau, their community and to work (because its near impossible to survive on student loan/ allowance on its own), students should not be expected to be assessed on every piece of content that is taught..." (Staff member)

## 6. RECOGNISE THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF STAFF WELLBEING AND STUDENT WELLBEING

The importance of valuing and investing in staff wellbeing was seen as crucial to achieving positive student wellbeing outcomes.

#### STRENGTHS

Staff wellness month; a valued childcare service; an awareness by some students of the need for realistic expectations given they could see how high staff workloads are.

"Can only speak to humanities and social science, but most of my lecturers have zero stress policies and foster great student/lecturer relationships." (Student)

## OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

Staff highlighted the importance of being fairly valued and recognised for the work they do; staff-student ratios that enable staff to work sustainably; simplifying staff recruitment processes; flexibility in relation to taha whānau obligations; aligning trimester breaks with school holidays where possible; shared conversations between staff and students about enhancing the collective wellbeing of our community.

"Student wellbeing depends on competent, resilient, dependable and healthy academics in the teaching and learning environment..." (Staff member)

PLEASE NOTE: THESE STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS THAT STUDENTS AND STAFF HAVE IDENTIFIED IN RELATION TO STAFF WELLBEING WILL BE SHARED WITH HUMAN RESOURCES TO CONSIDER AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STAFF WELLBEING FRAMEWORK PROGRESSES.



Photo credit: Image Services

# 7. ESTABLISH WELLBEING AS A CORE COMPONENT OF OUR PLANS, POLICIES, DECISIONS, AND SYSTEMS

Students and staff want wellbeing treated as a Te Herenga Waka priority, whether that was in our strategy, plans, policies, decisions, or systems.

## STRENGTHS

A high-level recognition of wellbeing as a priority; an increasing awareness of how important it is to factor in wellbeing; active implementation of the Pastoral Care Code through the creation of a Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework.

*"I think the effort from the university is fantastic and I do feel as though student wellbeing is a priority..." (Student)* 

## OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

Realistically evaluating the impact of decisions on staff/student time and wellbeing; transparent decision making; open dialogue between staff and students; ensuring feedback systems are responsive and anonymous; action focused approaches, making decision-making processes less bureaucratic and more culturally diverse; anonymous conflict resolution and complaint processes that maintain the wellbeing and integrity of students and result in action.

"Implement the Okanagan Charter<sup>1</sup> and make wellbeing a priority. Start by listening to the Vice Chancellors in conversation video from the recent conference, who make wellbeing a priority in their learning institutions and how it has a flow on effect for all the major equity issues." (Staff member)



Photo credit: Image Services

## 8. ADDRESS CAMPUS AND CITY SAFETY

Staff and students stressed the importance of campus (including accommodation) safety and feeling unsafe in the central city. This issue impacted both students personally and those who cared deeply about having a safe University and wider Poneke community.

#### STRENGTHS

A sentiment that stigma is gradually being removed from talking openly about issues surrounding safety and discrimination; embracing the challenge and mandate that the Pastoral Care Code provides was seen as a strength; actively working together towards an environment that fosters wellbeing and doesn't tolerate harm; the University recently joining the Poneke Promise.

"Lots of marketing around the place (I do see posters) with positive messages that everyone will see. Making sure Student Interest & Conflict Resolution and VUWSA Advocacy services are well supported. Having a transparent, confidential and very easy complaints process when needed." (Staff member)

#### OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

Staff and students, particularly female and LGBTQIA+ students, called for more victim-led, anonymous complaints processes, which prioritise the safety of those who have experienced sexual harm, bullying, and discrimination and for Te Herenga Waka to take action on repeatedly raised issues. Both staff and students expressed concern about drug and alcohol use in halls of residence and during Orientation, and viewed possible solutions related to the implementation of the Pastoral Care Code as important. Students wanted more prominent campus security who can respond to issues of safety; preventative infrastructure such as lighting in known areas where harm takes place and better public transport systems which transport people between campus and city more safely.



Photo credit: T. Levinson (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

"City safety is definitely something that is on my mind as a female. It can be intimidating walking to each campus without a direct line to get help. I think something that could help this is having more prominent campus security or people that can be contacted immediately just for that peace of mind." (Student)

## 9. INFLUENCE STUDENTS' COST OF LIVING

Staff and students highlighted the cost of food, public transport, and accommodation (including halls of residence) as contributing to languishing wellbeing.

## STRENGTHS

The availability of scholarships and hardship grants at Te Herenga Waka – however students would like simpler access to these. Students greatly appreciated the reduced cost of public transport (half price fares) to travel around the city, and the free rides between campuses provided by VUWSA so that some didn't have to choose between saving bus money or coming to campus for class. Both staff and students valued the fruit and vegetable market.

"Many of these services are already offered through programs such as the hardship fund. These services need to be continued and bolstered (financially/staffing/etc) in proportion to the increases in difficulties students face."

(Staff member)

#### OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

That the University collaborate with and influence local and national government to provide better quality student housing and free public transport. Both students and staff wanted more cheap and nutritional food options to be made available on all campuses.

"Cost of living!! So many students cannot afford to just study - they are studying while working, even while using StudyLink and this massively impacts on their ability to focus on their studies. Not to mention, rent is incredibly expensive so often students are living in sub-par flats in such poor condition that their health could be impacted." (Staff member)



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## 10. UNDERSTAND AND ACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Staff and students felt that climate change is a tangible threat to students' wellbeing. Climate change was a significant concern for many students. They wanted the University to influence climate change policies and to have opportunities to take action themselves.

#### STRENGTHS

Our Te Herenga Waka focus on sustainability initiatives; numerous active academics in climate change research; both students and staff value sustainability at an individual and organisational level and recognise the importance of taking action. The Living Pā is seen as an emerging hope for supporting our sustainability aspirations.

*"I would like to know exactly what Te Herenga Waka is doing regarding climate change, as I hear some things but want more comprehensive information...."* (Student)

#### OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

Strategies for students to focus on studies while these concerns are ever present; opportunities for staff and students to act on these issues both practically and academically; for Te Herenga Waka to actively communicate how it is contributing to mitigating climate change; greater profiling of academics' media about climate change; for Te Herenga Waka to use our influence to advocate for climate change mitigation and effective action at local and national government level.

"Ensure the university is clearly seen to recognise and address its impact on the climate and to advocate for effective action at government level." (Staff member)



Photo credit: NASA/Kathryn Hansen

## APPENDIX

## STUDENT SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey included optional demographic questions. All student voices, including those from equity groups were weighted equally when analysing the results of this survey. We had good engagement from students in equity groups, which we intentionally sought as they are more likely to be affected by wellbeing issues.

## ETHNICITY

	Survey Respondents	2021 Student Population	
Total Number of Students	495	20816	
New Zealand European/ Pākeha	38%	700/	
European	13%	70%	
Asian	11%	21%	
Māori	7%	11%	
Pasifika	5%	7%	
Other	7%	2%	
Prefer not to state	3%	-	
Did not answer	16%	-	

#### Survey 2021 Student Disability or Deaf Respondents Population Total Number of Students 495 20816 Identify as Deaf or having a disability, impairment, long-term injury, or medical 25% ~10%\* condition Do not identify as Deaf or having a disability, impairment, long-term injury, 32% or medical condition Did not answer 43%

\* In 2021, 2516 students were registered with Te Amaru—Disability Services as having a disability. This represented 10% of 2021 domestic undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments.

International/Domestic	Survey Respondents	2021 Student Population
Total Number of Students	495	20816
Domestic Students	49%	91%
International Students	15%	9%
Did not answer	36%	-

## DIVERSITY

LGBTQIA+ or Takatāpui	Survey Respondents	2021 Student Population
Total Number of Students	495	20816
Identify as LGBTQIA+ or Takatāpui	27%	no data available
Do not identify as LGBTQIA+ or Takatāpui	42%	no data available
Did not answer	31%	-

# APPENDIX CONTINUED

## STAFF SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey included optional demographic questions.

## STAFF ROLE

Survey Respondents	2021 Staff
150	5363
54%	38%
43%	58%
3%	4%
86%	-
14%	-
	Respondents   150   54%   43%   3%   86%

## LOCATION

Campus	Survey Respondents	2021 Staff
Total Number of Staff	155	5363
Kelburn campus based	72%	72%
Pipitea campus based	15%	15%
Te Aro campus based	13%	8%
Auckland based	0.1%	0.1%
Other	-	5%



CAPITAL THINKING. GLOBALLY MINDED. MAI I TE IHO KI TE PAE

