AUT

NEW ZEALAND POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
TE KĀHUI RANGAHAU MANA TAURITE

Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission

TRENDS IN OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN NEW ZEALAND

Overview

This study examines how gender representation across occupations has changed in New Zealand over the last five decades.

Data

- All **Census waves**: 1976-2023.
- Occupational segregation is measured using the **Duncan Index**, which captures gender differences in the distribution of workers across occupations.
- **Fuchs decomposition** employed to examine what drives changes over time, separating effects from changing gender balance within occupations and shifts in the mix of occupations in the economy.

Conclusion

- **Progress has been made**, but occupational gender segregation remains across many sectors.
- **Robust, transparent and well-resourced pay-equity systems** are essential to sustain fairness, close gaps and support long-term productivity.

Key Findings

Steady Decline in Segregation

1976	**2023**

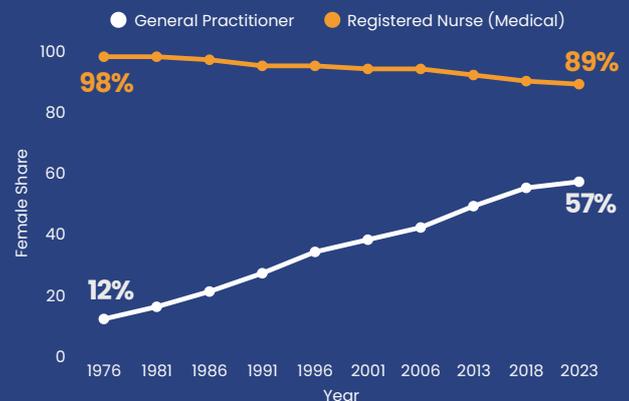33.1%

Occupational segregation fell by 33.1% between 1976 and 2023.

Women Driving Change

78%

Around three-quarters of the decline reflects women entering previously male-dominated jobs. Men have only marginally moved into female-dominated roles.

For example – In the health sector:

○ General Practitioner ● Registered Nurse (Medical)

98%
89%

12%
57%

Female Share

Year: 1976 1981 1986 1991 1996 2001 2006 2013 2018 2023

Persistent Gender Imbalances

Care, education, and community roles remain strongly female-dominated. Technical, trade, and transport occupations continue to be male-dominated.

Segregation Linked to Pay Gaps

Gendered sorting contributes to ongoing pay disparities. Female-dominated occupations are likely to experience structural undervaluation.

Younger Cohorts More Balanced

Newer generations enter the workforce with more integrated occupational patterns. These changes are a major contributor to long-run progress.

Link to full report: https://bit.ly/occ-seg