

FIND

STATE OF THE MARKET

QUARTER THREE 2026

Contents

3 INTRO: ENOUGH WAITING?

Businesses are starting to act again, with contracting strong and AI moving into practical use.

4 CLIENT SPOTLIGHT: SISTERS OF COMPASSION

The history of Suzanne Aubert and the Sisters' longstanding community work in New Zealand. Growing demand for the Soup Kitchen, Retreat Centre and wider community support services.

6 WELLINGTON IT & DIGITAL MARKET

Technology hiring is improving, contracting is growing and specialist talent is becoming harder to secure.

7 AUCKLAND IT & DIGITAL MARKET

Contract hiring remains strong, with demand focused on AI, cloud, data, security and transformation.

8 FIND'S INSIGHT SERIES: INTRO TO FRASER WHINERAY

Fraser Whineray discusses the strategic and commercial leadership that Boards increasingly expect from executives.

9 AUCKLAND ACCOUNTING MARKET

Auckland accounting hiring is improving, but employers remain cautious and selective.

10 WELLINGTON ACCOUNTING MARKET

Vacancies are increasing, candidate supply is tightening and salaries remain relatively stable.

11 WELLINGTON CORPORATE MARKET

Candidate supply remains high, early recovery is emerging amid cautious employer hiring.

12 DATA & ANALYTICS

Understanding the market.



Enough waiting?

There seems to be a fairly common mood across New Zealand at the moment: we're all a little tired of waiting.

Waiting for the economy to properly turn. Waiting for confidence to return. Waiting for interest rates, global events, government policy, AI, the weather or whatever this week's reason is, to give us some certainty about what comes next. The problem, of course, is that certainty rarely sends an invitation.

After a couple of pretty bruising years, the conversations we're having with clients and candidates feel different. Nobody is suggesting everything is suddenly wonderful, but equally there is less appetite to sit on the sidelines indefinitely.

Businesses still need to grow, systems still need replacing, projects still need delivering and good people still leave. Recruitment reflects that.

The market remains uneven. Auckland and Wellington are moving at different speeds, permanent and contracting markets are behaving differently, and some sectors are considerably busier than others. But underneath all of that we are seeing organisations start to make decisions again.

Contracting continues to play an important role. For many clients it provides exactly what this environment demands — access to capability, flexibility and the ability to get work done without necessarily making a long-term commitment. Transformation, technology, data, finance, risk and change continue to generate activity as businesses focus less on adding headcount and more on delivering outcomes.

At the same time, the assumption that a softer employment market means an unlimited supply of great candidates simply isn't proving true. There may be more people applying for jobs, but experienced,

proven and genuinely high performing people remain difficult to find. Many are understandably cautious about moving, while others have headed offshore during the downturn.

And then there is AI. Every conversation seems to require an AI paragraph now, so here it is.

What has changed is that the conversation is becoming less about whether AI will affect jobs and more about where it can genuinely improve productivity. We are seeing organisations move from curiosity toward practical application. There will undoubtedly be jobs that change, some that disappear and others we haven't invented yet. Recruitment will be no different.

For us, the underlying principle remains pretty simple: technology can make things faster, but people still make the important decisions.

So are we through the difficult part? Probably too early to call. But after spending much of the past two years talking about green shoots, false starts and cautious optimism, perhaps the more important observation is that businesses are getting on with business again. And that feels like progress.

On behalf of the Find Recruitment Group



Mike McKay

Mike McKay, Director



Sisters of Compassion

Our Lady's Home of Compassion
2 Rhine St, Island Bay

Find Recruitment has placed kaimahi in several roles with the Sisters of Compassion Group over recent years including a Chief Financial Officer, Marketing and Design Specialist, Archivist/Historian, Communications Specialist, and the Compassion Housing Manager. The Home of Compassion in Island Bay offers a unique workplace, and we were curious to learn more about the history and offerings of the Home of Compassion Retreat Centre, the legacy of Suzanne Aubert, and the work of the Sisters of Compassion and the wider Compassion whānau.

Beginnings

The Sisters of Compassion began as a small community led by the extraordinary French-born missionary Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert, whose mission was simple but radical for the late 19th century: to offer practical, unconditional care to anyone in need, with a focus on children, the sick, the elderly, Māori, and those in poverty. Suzanne Aubert arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand

on a whaling ship from France in 1860, and spent the next six decades teaching, nursing, learning te reo Māori, and serving isolated communities. She travelled the North Island often on foot to nurse sick and struggling families. She influenced many areas such as health, education, women's rights, and social welfare. Her work in the fields of medicine, te reo Māori, and an evolving spirituality was pioneering and far-reaching.

In Auckland Suzanne worked with Peata Hoki, who taught her te reo Māori and te tikanga, and together they educated Māori girls. Suzanne then spent twelve years in Hawke's Bay in the 1870s, district nursing, including visiting marae, vaccinating people against smallpox. She combined her western medical training with traditional Māori rongoā learned from women who were tohunga rongoā (healing specialists). She was cherished by Māori and pakeha alike for her good medicine, common sense, laughter, and love.



Suzanne Aubert

Suzanne's vision grew into Aotearoa's only home grown Catholic religious order – the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion – founded at Hiruhārama/Jerusalem on the Whanganui River in 1892, where Suzanne and a group of young women ran a mission; teaching, nursing, making medicines, and caring for abandoned or orphaned children and running a hillside farm where they planted many fruit trees. They worked alongside the people of Ngāti Hau and Ngāti Ruaka. The Sisters of Compassion continue to treasure their deep and longstanding relationship with Hiruhārama and the people of the Whanganui River.



By the late 1890s, Wellington-based Catholics and doctors were asking Suzanne to bring her renown work to the fast-growing city, where poverty and unemployment were creating social problems as the country climbed out of economic depression. In 1899, Suzanne and three Sisters arrived and began district nursing, caring for the disabled, and the elderly. When Suzanne saw a need she adapted her work; she set up Wellington's first creche to support working mothers and established the Soup Kitchen in 1901 which still operates today. She was also involved setting up the organisation that was to become the Plunket Society.

1907: Our Lady's Home of Compassion opens in Island Bay

Island Bay was a growing suburb in the early 1900s when Suzanne purchased 3.5 acres in 1900 and built a large institution that could accommodate a children's home, medical services, and community support.

Our Lady's Home of Compassion opened in 1907, first as a home for children, then expanding into the start of a hospital. Over time, the site also became home to the Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion and, later, Suzanne Aubert's resting place, a recognised Category 1 historic site.

People are sometimes surprised by how wide ranging the Sisters of Compassion Group's work is. Most Wellingtonians are aware of the Soup Kitchen, and some may know about the community housing available, but fewer realise the ongoing resonance of Suzanne Aubert's story, or the richness of the Retreat Centre in Island Bay, which is unlike anything else in Aotearoa.

Our Lady's Home of Compassion today

The Compassion whānau continue to provide practical, community based support for people experiencing hardship, including hunger, homelessness, and isolation. Their work centres on:

- The Retreat Centre at the Home of Compassion, Island Bay.
- The Compassion Soup Kitchen on Tory Street, Wellington.
- Compassion Housing community housing in Horowhenua and Upper Hutt.
- Ongoing ties with Hiruhārama/Jerusalem and local iwi.

Many people are amazed when they discover what sits tucked away at 2 Rhine Street. The Chapel is a Category 1 Heritage Place, a living centre of history, hospitality, and care, which includes:

- **Cloister Café** - A light filled café with courtyard, open to the public six days a week, known for its calm atmosphere and delicious baked goods.



CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

- **Conference and meeting venue** - modern spaces with updated AV facilities used by a range of organisations, community groups, schools, government agencies, and retreat participants. The site offers three dedicated meeting rooms suitable for gatherings, retreats, workshops, and meetings.
- **Accommodation and Retreats** - we have nine single rooms, five double rooms, and six twin-single rooms, each with private bathroom facilities offering comfortable spaces for rest and refreshment. Guests also have access to shared kitchen and lounge spaces, a main dining room, laundry facilities, the smaller Crombie Chapel, and the main Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion for reflection.
- **The Chapel** - A stunning architectural space for prayer, concerts, funerals, and reflection featuring a notable depiction of the Stations of the Cross by renowned local artist John Drawbridge. The Chapel includes Suzanne Aubert's final resting place - A nationally significant site of pilgrimage and remembrance.



- **Heritage Centre/Museum** - Exhibits tell Suzanne Aubert's story, the history of the Sisters, and the development of early social welfare in Aotearoa.
- **Gardens, Grotto, water features, & walking paths** - beautiful outdoor spaces designed for quiet reflection and community use.

Our Lady's Home of Compassion is a place where history, spirituality, social service, and hospitality meet. Along with offering retreats, it attracts a variety of visitors; school groups, corporate groups, artists, writers, volunteers, and others.

Compassion Soup Kitchen

The Compassion Soup Kitchen serves over 90,000 meals a year* to people facing hunger, homelessness, mental health challenges, addiction, poverty, and isolation.



The Soup Kitchen at 132 Tory Street offers two hot meals a day, six days a week, a place to rest, and access to free clothing, blankets, and toiletries. Additional support is available to Soup Kitchen whānau through partnerships with Orange Sky (laundry/shower services), Te Aro Health Clinic (medical services), and social workers through Catholic Social Services. The Soup Kitchen is a popular place to volunteer and, along with regular volunteers, welcomes corporate groups to come in and help for a few hours as part of team building and social responsibility efforts.

Now 125 years old, Compassion Soup Kitchen survives because the wider community stands alongside it. The Soup Kitchen receives large kai donations from food rescue organisations Kiwi Community Assistance and Kaibosh every week and many families, individuals and organisations offer generous support to ensure these services can continue.

In the past year several local Wellington businesses, from car dealerships to bars have run food and clothing drives to collect clothing and kai for Soup Kitchen.

The biggest challenge Soup Kitchen kaimahi are seeing in Wellington right now is more people turning up hungry and feeling isolated, and they need more than just a meal. The Soup Kitchen has become a hub for people dealing with complex, overlapping pressures.

- Rising demand - Meal numbers have climbed sharply. Breakfasts and dinners are consistently busy, with many days reaching the upper end of our capacity.
- New groups seeking help - More people who are employed but can't afford food, more people in emergency or unstable housing, more people dealing with mental health strain and more families.
- Cost of living pressures - Rent, food, and transport costs are pushing people into crisis faster than support systems can respond.

The Soup Kitchen isn't just a place to eat. It's a place where people can take a breath, connect with others and find support. Clothing and essentials, including jackets, socks, toiletries, blankets, are given out weekly. Wrap around support is becoming as important as the meals themselves.



Ways you can help

- **Sponsor a meal** – An individual, family, group, or a business can sponsor a breakfast or dinner service, covering the cost of kai for 80–120 people. It's one of the most direct ways to support, and costs between \$300 and \$450.
- **Start a workplace clothing drive** for mens clothing – size large jackets, shirts, hoodies, jeans, sneakers, trackpants, socks, boots and toiletries (soap, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo and razors) are needed. Sleeping bags and blankets are also in high demand.
- **Start a workplace canned food drive** for tins of items such as beans, lentils, tinned tomatoes, spaghetti and fruit.
- **Group volunteering** - ideal for corporate teams who want to make a meaningful contribution to our work and who are open to a team building exercise with a difference; a one-off session usually runs for two to four hours and includes meal prep and general help.

*In the 12 months to 30 June 2026, Compassion Soup Kitchen served over 90,000 meals to those in need in Wellington

Follow Compassion whānau on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

www.compassion.org.nz

Wellington IT & Digital Market Overview

Momentum is building

Through Q3, the Wellington technology market has continued to improve. It is still an inconsistent market, but compared with 12 months ago there is considerably more activity and, importantly, more confidence.

The biggest improvement has been in contracting. We have seen a noticeable lift in contract placements over the past few months, along with some improvement in margins after a long period of pressure.

We're also starting to hear a different message from clients: good candidates are becoming harder to find. There may still be plenty of people in the broader market, but experienced candidates with the right specialist skills and proven delivery experience are becoming increasingly scarce.

Government starting to move

We're seeing encouraging signs across the Wellington government market.

After an extended period of restructuring, cost reduction and limited hiring, more agencies are starting to engage around Technology & Transformation capability.

It's certainly not back to historical levels and budgets remain tight, but there is more movement. We are seeing demand across Project and Programme Delivery, Business Analysis, Data, Software Engineering, Architecture and specialist technology roles.

Fixed-term employment remains popular, although salaries don't always match candidate expectations. We're also seeing organisations use consulting and professional-services channels to access contractors where direct contractor hiring remains constrained.

Talent market

The candidate market is becoming more balanced. Strong candidates are moving quickly and we're seeing counteroffers becoming increasingly common, particularly for specialist technology talent.

There is also continued competition from Auckland and Australia for experienced Wellington candidates.

This is creating an interesting market: overall candidate numbers remain relatively high, but finding the right person is becoming more difficult.

AI & Automation

AI continues to be a major talking point, but the conversation is shifting from experimentation towards practical delivery.

Organisations are increasingly focused on how AI and automation can deliver genuine productivity improvements, and what is required around data, governance, security and integration to make that happen.

Proven commercial AI experience remains relatively scarce, making this an area we expect to continue growing.

Looking ahead

We're positive about the direction of the Wellington market heading into the final quarter of 2026.

We're not suggesting a return to the boom conditions of previous years. Hiring decisions remain measured, budgets are scrutinised and the market continues to move at different speeds.

- Contracting market is improving.
- Government technology and transformation activity is beginning to return.
- Good candidates are becoming harder to secure in specialist areas.
- Organisations are moving from transformation planning into delivery.
- AI, automation and data are creating new areas of demand.

There is still some way to go, but Wellington Technology & Transformation feels considerably healthier than it did this time last year.



Introducing

A big welcome to **Chris Gibbons** who joined our Wellington IT & Digital team this quarter as a Senior Consultant.

Chris brings extensive recruitment experience across New Zealand and Australia, with a strong background in Technology & Transformation and the government sector.

Chris will be focused on growing our government relationships across Wellington and has already hit the ground running.

We're stoked to have him on board!



Chris Gibbons
Senior Consultant
022 430 9042

Auckland IT & Digital Market Overview



Q3 2026

Auckland is still New Zealand's biggest tech market, and this quarter it's also been its most contested. Unemployment sits at 5.6%, the highest since 2015, and underutilisation has climbed to 13.8%, around 440,000 people. More good candidates than usual are on the market, and hiring managers are being pickier because they finally can be. Here's what that's actually meant, sector by sector.

The AI skills gold rush needs a rethink

Job ads mentioning AI skills are up 94.1% year-on-year, which looks like a boom until you dig in. The real growth is narrower and more specific: AI ethics and governance requests up 368.8%, agentic AI up 118.6%, generative AI up 77%. ICT leads every sector on AI mentions, at 16.7% of ads. But "AI skills required" as a throwaway line in a brief just attracts noise. What's genuinely being hired for is people who've owned governance or model-risk work, shipped an agentic or generative workflow, or run vendor evaluations, not people who've had a play with ChatGPT.

Contract is having a moment

Rates aren't historically high, the OCR at 2.75% is still well below its long-run average, but it's just turned upward again after a cutting cycle, and the Reserve Bank has signalled more hikes could follow. That renewed tightening, layered on soft income growth, is enough to make permanent headcount the harder sell at present. The work itself hasn't gone away: transformation programmes, system upgrades and change initiatives still need doing, they're just increasingly being staffed as contract, particularly in financial services and professional services, on 6–12 month terms. Contract-to-permanent is sitting at around 60/40 in favour of contract overall, and if you've only ever worked permanent, this is a good year to have that conversation.

There's an interesting contradiction worth calling out here, too: while the wider market leans contract, a couple of the bigger finance-sector players are currently running the opposite play, pushing hard on their own contract-to-permanent conversion drives. Some of that's genuine workforce planning; some of it looks

more like nervousness about losing institutional knowledge, dressed up as strategy. Either way, it's dropping some seriously good contract talent onto the market, career contractors with no interest in converting. That's created a temporary glut of good, immediately available contract resource. If you've had your finger over the go button on a project in this space, this is about as good a window as you'll get.

The pay conversation everyone's avoiding

Annual wage growth is running at 2.0% against inflation at 4.1%. That gap is real, and pretending otherwise makes for an awkward review. It's also brought counter-offers back with a vengeance: replacing someone mid-project is slow and expensive, so employers are throwing money at people to stay rather than lose them. Worth knowing whichever side of the desk you're sitting on.

Where the demand actually sits

The steady, reliable work is cloud migration, platform consolidation, data infrastructure builds and security uplift programmes, alongside ERP/CRM and finance-systems implementation. On the people side, demand for senior business analysts and developers has stayed consistent all quarter, it's where we've done the bulk of our own placements. Strong candidates are still rarely the ones actively applying; most are employed and quiet, which is exactly why a scattergun ad full of buzzwords keeps landing the wrong shortlist.

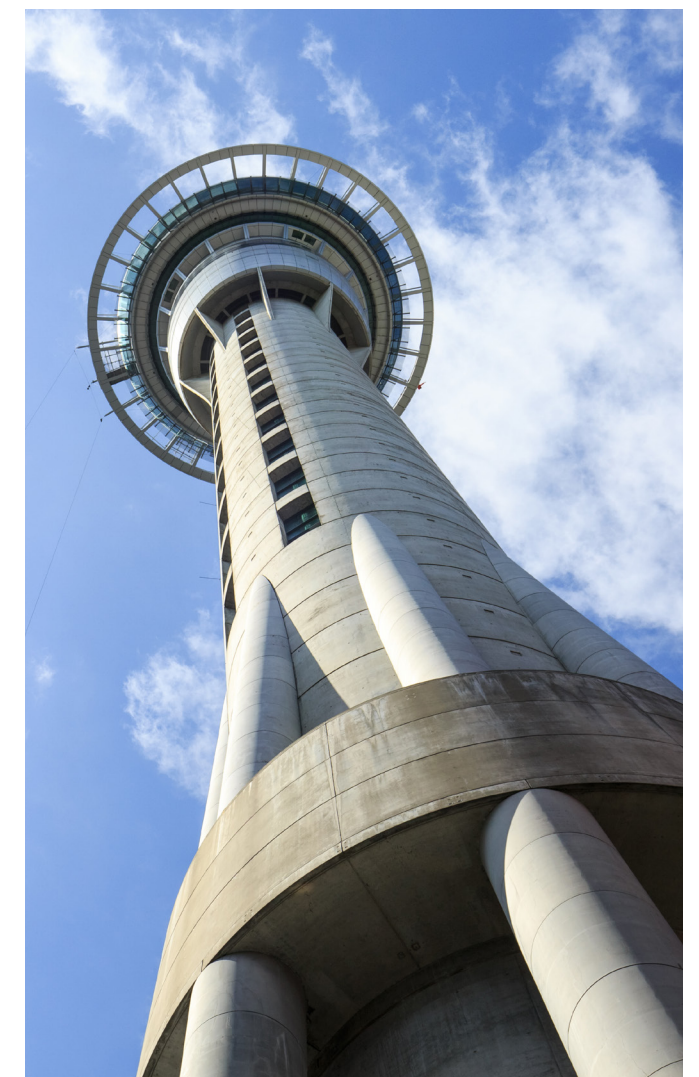
What we're actually placing

The clearest premium in the market sits with AI-experienced product owners and developers, people who've actually built agents, worked hands-on with MCPs, and live inside AI-assisted development cycles day to day. Every business trying to get an AI story off the ground wants this exact profile, and there aren't many of them around.

Interestingly, their salary expectations are holding steady rather than spiking. What's changed is speed to hire: good candidates are typically running two or three conversations at once, so a slow process is still the fastest way to lose the best person in the room. Elsewhere, the BI-type demand that ran hot late last year and into early 2026 has cooled, replaced by rising demand for project resourcing more broadly.

What this means for you

If you're hiring: be specific about the actual work, not the trend, and move fast once you see the right person, brief accuracy and speed both matter more than they did a year ago. If you're looking: your options are broader than the headlines suggest, but expect real competition for the best-fit roles.



Find's Insight Series:

Introducing Fraser Whineray

Rather than simply reporting what has already happened, effective executives help directors anticipate what lies ahead. They identify emerging risks, recognise opportunities and provide clear advice about the decisions the organisation needs to make next.

Setting the tone from the top

Fraser emphasised that Board culture influences the entire organisation. During uncertain periods, employees, customers and investors all take their cues from leadership.

A Board that demonstrates trust, alignment and constructive debate creates confidence. A divided Board can amplify uncertainty. He cautioned against knee-jerk decision making, comparing it to having everyone “shift to one side of a dinghy at once.”

Boards must also give capable executives the space to lead. Their role is to set direction, provide oversight and support management, rather than becoming involved in every operational decision. As Fraser put it, he only “grabs the steering wheel” when there is an imminent accident.

Sustainable commercial leadership

Strong financial leadership extends beyond reporting results. Executives must understand how the organisation creates value for its customers, shareholders, employees and the wider community.

Fraser described cash flow as “the blood running through an organisation’s arteries.” Without strong financial foundations, businesses cannot continue investing in their people, customers, innovation or future growth.

Standing still is equally dangerous. Fraser compared it to “running the wrong way up an escalator.” Organisations need to keep challenging assumptions, improving performance and responding to changing conditions.

Looking through the windscreen

As part of our Find Insights Series, we recently hosted Fraser Whineray, former Chief Executive of Mercury and Chief Operating Officer of Fonterra. Fraser is currently Independent Chair of Ten Peaks and a Non-Executive Director of Waste Management and Port of Tauranga.

Drawing on his extensive executive and governance experience, Fraser shared his perspective on what Boards increasingly expect from senior leaders.

His central message was clear: technical expertise is simply the price of admission. The executives who earn the confidence of their Board are those who understand the wider organisation and can connect finance, risk, operations, people and strategy.



Making Board time count

Board time is one of an organisation’s most valuable resources. The best Board papers are concise, clearly structured and focused on the decisions directors need to make. Senior executives should also understand the full Board agenda, not just the matters relating to their own function. This broader contribution demonstrates commercial maturity and an enterprise-wide perspective.

Perhaps Fraser’s most lasting message was that great executives help Boards “look through the windscreen rather than the rear-view mirror.”

This aligns closely with what we are seeing across the executive recruitment market. Organisations are increasingly seeking leaders who combine technical capability with commercial judgement, strategic thinking and the confidence to contribute across the whole business.

The question for senior leaders is simple:

Am I reporting what has happened, or am I helping the Board understand what matters most, what lies ahead and what decisions need to be made next?



The Find team with Fraser Whineray and event partners

The Auckland Accounting market is moving again! But...cautiously



There are some green shoots appearing in the accounting employment market. After a slow 18 months or so, we feel Auckland is showing signs of improvement with hiring activity picking up, businesses are starting to revisit roles that had been put on hold, so here at Find we've accepted that flat is the new up!

More activity, with a bit of caution

The wider Auckland market has begun to move. Our friends at SEEK reported Auckland job ads up 1% in August and 5% on the year. Yes that is encouraging, but the August lift was led by hospitality, tourism, manufacturing, transport and logistics.

Clients that held off on hiring are starting to revisit roles, particularly where the finance team needs more capacity or better information to make decisions. The brief is often quite specific. Employers want someone who can deliver the numbers, understand what sits behind them and talk to the wider business.

The shortlist is not always where you expect

There may be more applicants around, but a full inbox does not necessarily produce the right shortlist. It's that caution, the more observational type who are unlikely to move just because another job has appeared online, they need a better reason to leave a safe harbour, we've seen

that for different reasons but a general ranking would be a broader remit than what they have or a clearer path forward or a business where they can have a real say. For employers, being clear about what the person can actually do and where the role could lead matters as much as the job title.

Finance teams are being asked for more

Auckland businesses are definitely watching costs and cash closely. Those that can forecast well, explain a variance without hiding behind a spreadsheet or computer screen, this will help make practical calls through to giving strategic direction so FP&A and business partnering skills are right up there these days as most valuable with sound technical accounting skills a given.

Pay still matters

A softer market hasn't suddenly made good candidates go cheap. There is the cost of living to deal with! Good people know their value and will weigh up the risk of leaving a secure role. Pay needs to be realistic, but flexibility, leadership, workload, career development and the quality of the opportunity can all influence the decision.

Looking ahead

I'm more positive about Auckland than I was earlier in the year – hooray! There is more movement, but it is likely to be gradual and uneven, get through the election, to the end of the year and in to 2027. Employers have some choice, while the people they most want may still take FINDing and convincing.

For employers, the message is straightforward: know what you need, move with purpose, the best candidate market wide will be sitting in your inbox, it's relationships and knowing where to find the right people becoming important again.

Market data: SEEK NZ Employment Report, August 2026. <https://nz.seek.com/about/news/article/seek-nz-employment-report-august26>

Wellington Accounting Market

The gap is closing

After a challenging couple of years for the Wellington employment market, there are good reasons to be increasingly positive about where the accounting sector is heading.

Wellington has a significant accounting community. Census data counted more than 4,250 employed accountants across the region in 2023, and when we consider the broader accounting and finance community, we estimate the addressable talent pool to be somewhere around 4,500 to 5,000 people.

That is a substantial talent base. But one of the most interesting changes we are seeing isn't necessarily the overall number of accountants. It's the changing demographic of those available to employers.

The accounting workforce is changing

One of the clearest trends we're seeing through our networks is a reduction in the availability of 25 to 35 year old Chartered Accountants, alongside an increasing number of experienced professionals aged 60 plus who either want or need to continue working.

There are likely several factors contributing to this. Wellington has experienced population and migration pressures, while younger New Zealand professionals have always had the option of taking their qualifications overseas. A Chartered Accountancy qualification is highly transferable, making Australia, the UK and other international markets realistic options for younger professionals.

There is also an element of caution. In an uncertain employment market, good people with secure jobs tend to stay where they are. A candidate who might previously have been open to a conversation about their next career move can be more reluctant to take that risk.

At the other end of the spectrum, people are working for longer. The cost of living, retirement savings and simply wanting to remain professionally active are all likely contributing factors. We are consequently seeing some highly experienced accountants looking to extend their careers beyond the traditional retirement age. These are observations from our recruitment activity rather than conclusions we can attribute directly to Census data, but the shift is becoming increasingly noticeable.

The gap between jobs and candidates is closing

Perhaps the most encouraging development is what we're seeing in job volumes. Our accounting vacancies are increasing quarter on quarter. And this matches SEEK's statistics for both Wellington and NZ in general (SEEK job volumes).

For employers, the last couple of years have generally meant a relatively large candidate pool competing for a smaller number of opportunities. That balance is beginning to change.

As more roles enter the market, the gap between the number of jobs available and the number of suitable candidates available is narrowing. We don't believe Wellington is suddenly returning to the extreme candidate-short conditions experienced in previous years.

Instead, we're moving towards a healthier and more balanced employment market. And that changes how organisations need to recruit.

Who you know is becoming important again

When candidate supply is high, advertising a vacancy and waiting for applications can produce a strong shortlist. As the market tightens, that becomes less reliable. Some of Wellington's best accountants aren't searching SEEK every morning. They're employed, performing well and aren't necessarily thinking about changing jobs. But that doesn't mean they wouldn't consider the right opportunity if someone they trust approached them about it.

Increasingly, recruitment is therefore becoming less about who applies and more about who you know. That places much greater importance on genuine specialist networks and deep sector knowledge. A recruiter working exclusively within a market knows who the strong Financial Accountants are, which Management Accountants have genuine commercial capability, who has developed into a strong Finance Business Partner, who might be ready for their first Financial Controller position and, importantly, who might listen to an opportunity despite not actively looking. That's where having a genuinely specialist accounting recruitment team makes a difference. We've spent years building those Wellington accounting networks and understanding the people within them.

Salaries are holding steady

Despite all the movement in the employment market, we're not seeing a significant correction in accounting salaries. Broadly, salaries are remaining steady.

Our salary data currently benchmarks Wellington Finance Managers at approximately \$140,000 to \$170,000, experienced Financial Accountants at \$120,000 to \$130,000, Finance Business Partners at \$130,000 to \$160,000, and experienced Management Accountants at \$130,000 to \$150,000. That stability is important.

Employers may have enjoyed greater candidate choice during the downturn, but quality accounting professionals have not suddenly become cheap. As vacancy volumes continue to improve and the available mid-career CA population remains relatively constrained, competitive remuneration will remain important.

And then there's the election

The upcoming general election adds another interesting variable for Wellington. With the election outcome looking close, the result will inevitably influence confidence and the speed and shape of Wellington's recovery.

Given the capital's exposure to government spending, policy direction and the public sector, Wellington tends to feel political and economic change more directly than many other parts of New Zealand. Regardless of the result, organisations will eventually need to move forward with projects, investment and hiring. The bigger question is likely to be how quickly that confidence returns.

Reasons for optimism

The Wellington accounting market isn't back to where it was at its hottest, and that may actually be a good thing. What we're beginning to see is a more sustainable market. Job volumes are increasing. Salaries are stable. Employers are hiring again.

At the same time, the demographic make-up of the available accounting workforce is changing and the pool of quality mid-career Chartered Accountants remains tighter than headline candidate numbers might suggest. For employers, that means the recruitment strategy that worked twelve months ago may not work twelve months from now.

The market is gradually shifting from "Who has applied?" back towards "Who do we know?" And in a specialist market like Wellington accounting, knowing the market, knowing the people and maintaining those relationships over many years is becoming valuable again. For us, that's a very positive sign of where the market is heading, and we now have our work cut out to find those hidden gems!

Wellington Corporate Market Overview

Wellington corporate recruitment is currently candidate rich, employer selective and vacancy constrained, but appears to be moving from contraction into early recovery.

Here are some key points:

1. Increasing **unemployment** and an increase in net **migration** has created a much deeper candidate pool, leading to employers having more choice when recruiting.
2. **Public sector restructuring** has flooded parts of the corporate candidate market across policy, HR, communications, procurement, administration, legal, property, change and advisory disciplines. This is arguably the biggest factor specific to Wellington.

This doesn't just affect government recruitment. Candidates displaced from agencies are applying to councils, Crown entities, professional services firms, associations, NGOs and private businesses.

3. The **7 November 2026 General Election** could be the biggest catalyst for corporate recruitment, which is particularly important for Wellington as the vast majority of corporate

Public Service workforce is based in the Wellington region. In the lead up to the election, some hiring managers may hesitate to commit to permanent headcount or programmes where future funding or organisational structures are uncertain.

Once a government is formed and priorities become clearer, we expect to see movements in the following fields:

Policy and advisory: New policy programmes and ministry requirements.

Procurement and commercial: New programmes create procurement, contract and supplier management requirements.

HR and organisational development: Restructures, workforce planning and organisational change create demand.

Communications and engagement: New initiatives require internal communications, public communications, stakeholder engagement and change communications.

Legal: Legislative, regulatory, commercial and employment changes can create additional workload.

4. Employers remain highly **cost conscious**. The Middle East conflict matters to corporate recruitment primarily through business confidence, inflation and operating costs.

This can produce behaviours such as:

- Replacing rather than adding headcount.
- Combining two positions into one.
- Hiring at a lower level.
- Using fixed term or contract resources.
- Leaving vacancies open longer.
- Requiring stronger business cases before approving recruitment.



Data & Analytics

Applicant Insight

The latest figures suggest a noticeable shift in market conditions. Employers are advertising considerably more opportunities, while the candidate pool has not grown with demand. This has reduced the number of applicants competing for each role and points to a less candidate-heavy market than earlier in the year, particularly compared with March 2026.

Adverts (Rolling 12 months data)

Job Listing	Oct 2024 - Oct 2025	Mar 2025 - Mar 2026	Oct 2025 - Oct 2026
Find IT Auckland	108	96	220
Find IT Wellington	165	135	239
Find Recruitment Auckland	143	115	216
Find Recruitment Wellington	133	100	188
Total Adverts	549	446	863

Applications (Rolling 12 months data)

Job Listing	Oct 2024 - Oct 2025	Mar 2025 - Mar 2026	Oct 2025 - Oct 2026
Find IT Auckland	7,630	7,106	7,665
Find IT Wellington	10,309	10,372	9,648
Find Recruitment Auckland	16,501	18,296	14,935
Find Recruitment Wellington	6,504	5,574	5,536
Total Applications	40,944	41,348	37,784

Average Applications per Advert (Rolling 12 months data)

Job Listing	Oct 2024 - Oct 2025	Mar 2025 - Mar 2026	Oct 2025 - Oct 2026
Find IT Auckland	71	74	35
Find IT Wellington	62	57	40
Find Recruitment Auckland	115	155	69
Find Recruitment Wellington	49	49	29
Total Average	75	84	44

Placement data

Placement patterns remain distinctly different across the four markets. IT continues to favour contracting, particularly Auckland, while Find Recruitment Auckland remains permanent-led. Find Recruitment Wellington stands out as the most contract-focused corporate market, with around three-quarters of placements now contract roles.

Permanent

Permanent Placements	Oct 2024 - Oct 2025	Mar 2025 - Mar 2026	Oct 2025 - Oct 2026
Find IT Auckland	12%	18%	15%
Find IT Wellington	16%	31%	31%
Find Recruitment Auckland	63%	72%	67%
Find Recruitment Wellington	35%	22%	24%

Contract

Contract Placements	Oct 2024 - Oct 2025	Mar 2025 - Mar 2026	Oct 2025 - Oct 2026
Find IT Auckland	88%	82%	85%
Find IT Wellington	84%	69%	69%
Find Recruitment Auckland	37%	28%	33%
Find Recruitment Wellington	65%	78%	76%

These pages contain data and reporting from our own systems and, where permitted, from our partners. This data is provided as a guide to the market, but does not guarantee or reflect the possible outcomes of job listings. Information enclosed may not be redistributed, amended or reproduced without express permission from Find Recruitment.

Understanding our audience

Overall, the data shows a diverse, predominantly mid-career candidate community. Most respondents are aged between 24 and 50, with the 30–40 age group the largest. Gender representation is relatively balanced but remains slightly male weighted. The ethnicity data reflects a highly multicultural candidate base, led by Indian and New Zealand European/Pākehā candidates, alongside a broad range of other ethnic backgrounds. Overall, the findings highlight the diversity of candidates engaging with Find and reinforce the importance of inclusive recruitment practices.

Candidate Gender Identity

Identifying Gender	% of Respondees
Cisgender Male (my sex assigned at birth and gender identity are the same)	50.2%
Cisgender Female (my sex assigned at birth and gender identity are the same)	38.8%
Prefer not to say	5.1%
My Gender is not listed	2.1%
Trans Man	1.1%
Non-Binary	0.9%
Trans Woman	0.9%
Gender Diverse	0.8%
Gender Queer, Intersex, & Takatāpui*	0.2%

**Gender Queer, Intersex, & Takatāpui are all listed individually in our survey however are grouped to accommodate space in this report.*

Candidate Age Groups

Age Group	% of Respondees
30 to 40	34.0%
40 to 50	22.1%
24 to 30	21.5%
50 to 64	12.8%
18 to 24	7%
65 or older	2.1%
Prefer not to say	0.6%

Candidate Ethnic Identity

Ethnicity	% of Respondees
Indian	32.3%
New Zealand European/Pākehā	25.5%
Other, e.g. Japanese, Tokelauan	0.2%
Chinese	8.4%
European	6.8%
Prefer not to say	1.0%
Fijian	1.2%
Māori	2.4%
American	1.2%
Samoan	1.1%
Cook Islands Māori	10%
Tongan	10%

Candidate Industry

Industry	% of Respondees
IT & Digital	36.6%
Accounting & Finance	29.6%
Other	9.6%
Technology	6.2%
Professional Services	5.3%
Sales & Marketing	4.3%
Business Support	3.4%
HR	2.1%
Risk & Compliance	1.5%
Prefer not to say	1.5%

Candidate Location

Location	% of Respondees
Auckland	36.8%
Wellington	29.5%
Other location	21.4%
Hamilton	3%
Christchurch	1.9%
Tauranga/Bay of Plenty	1.7%
Prefer not to say	1.5%
Nelson	1.1%
New Plymouth	0.9%
Palmerston North	0.9%
Gisborne	0.6%
Dunedin	0.4%
Rotorua	0.2%
Northland	0.2%
Greymouth, Queenstown, Invercargill	0%

Candidate neurodiversity

Category	% of Respondees
Not Applicable	85.6%
Prefer not to say	4.3%
ADHD	3.3%
Other	2.7%
Autism	1.6%
Dyslexia	0.8%
Bipolar	0.6%
Sensory Disorder	0.4%
Dyscalculia	0.2%
Epilepsy	0.2%
OCD	0.2%
Borderline Personality Disorder	0.2%
Tourettes, Dyspraxia, Down Syndrome	0%

