

# School Leavers without Qualifications

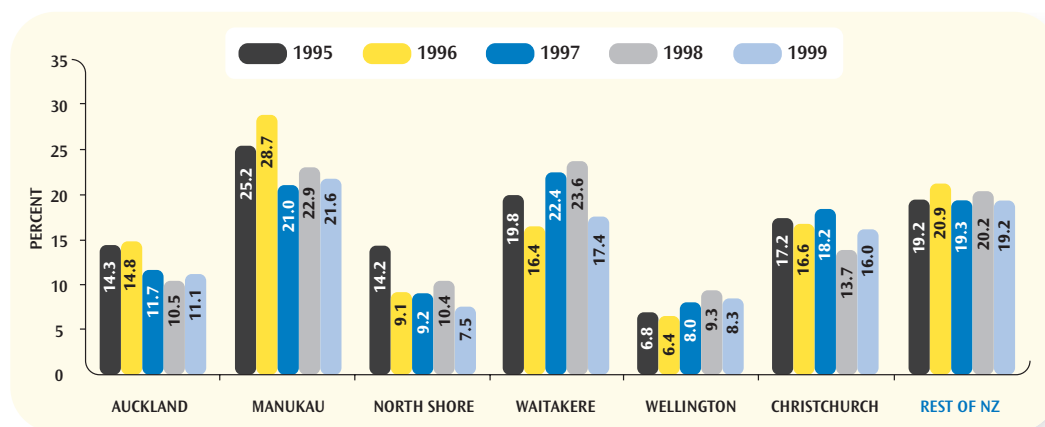
## What this is about...

As the economy and the labour market change, there is an increasing demand for a skilled labour force. School-level qualifications are an indirect indicator of a level of literacy and skill. School leavers without qualifications are more likely to have difficulty finding sustained and skilled employment than those who leave school with qualifications. Individuals who leave school without qualifications may find employment or acquire alternative qualifications at some stage, but measuring school leavers with no qualifications as a percentage of total school leavers in a year helps identify the job readiness of the future labour force.

## What did we find ?

- Over the last five years, the percentage of school leavers without qualifications as a percentage of all school leavers has fallen across the six largest cities, with the exception of Wellington City.
- Auckland, North Shore and Wellington Cities have the lowest proportion of school leavers with no qualifications.

### SCHOOL LEAVERS WITH NO QUALIFICATIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL SCHOOL LEAVERS (1995 TO 1999)



Data Source: Ministry of Education

In many cases Maori and Pacific Islands school leavers are over-represented among those leaving without qualifications. For example, in Auckland in 1999 Maori made up only 8.6% of school leavers, but were 23.1% of those without qualifications. In Waitakere the figures were 16% and 32.6%, and in Manukau 15.7% and 30.6%. In Auckland 20.3% of school leavers in 1999 were of Pacific Islands ethnicity, but they made up half of the 617 students who left with no qualifications.

Asian students tend to be under-represented among those leaving without qualifications. For example in 1999 in North Shore City, 555 school leavers were Asian, but only 19 left without qualifications.

There is a critical link between leaving school without a qualification and youth unemployment. Young people lacking skills, qualifications and work experience are vulnerable to unemployment. Research has shown that young people without a minimum of a secondary school level qualification can expect to encounter employment problems throughout their working lives.<sup>109</sup> As employers increasingly demand skilled labour in specific areas, high numbers of school leavers without qualifications points to a possible mismatch between the needs of employers and the skills of the labour force. This may have implications for the local economy in the longer term.

School qualifications are undergoing major changes which, together with raising the school leaving age to 16 years, is hoped will impact positively on the rates of school leavers without qualifications.