

## National Nursing Student Survey 2017

**Dr Jinny Willis**  
NZNO Principal Researcher

**NZNO NSU MEMBERSHIP 2017**

## Summary

Currently, there are 2862 students who are current financial members of New Zealand Nurses Organisation, Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa (NZNO). The national, anonymous web-based survey of student nurses was undertaken in March-April 2017. This is the seventh biennial survey of NZNO nursing student members; the previous survey was completed in 2015 and attracted 1105 participants. The survey had 922 respondents and all of the 18 schools of nursing were represented.

The main focus of the current survey was to investigate the self-care and health promotion knowledge and behaviours of nursing students. The work explored students' knowledge of how to access help on a range of issues for themselves and their fellow students.

### Positive findings

- most nursing schools provide a student health service on campus;
- student health services were rated very highly overall;
- support for a wide range of issues was available on campus and in general students knew where to source help for themselves and others; and
- healthy food was available at or near most schools and water was freely available.

### Particular concerns identified in this survey included:

- Managing fatigue and shift work.
- Financial difficulties, in particular the amount of time students spend on placement limits the opportunity to undertake paid work. In addition, around a third of students have responsibility for the care of children or whānau.
- Managing the emotional response to patients' whānau or family in distress.
- Student nurses are often encountering death and grief for the first time, and do not have the experience to manage themselves appropriately in these situations.
- Domestic violence.
- There are few resources or information around gender identity issues.
- No clear pathway for students experiencing social isolation.

### Limitations

As with all surveys, the results need to be interpreted with caution, due to the representativeness of those who choose to participate and the subjectivity of some of the views expressed.

### Dissemination and Recommendations

Representatives of the NSU presented the survey results to the Heads of Schools on 7 July 2017. Following the presentation discussion group comprising students and the Heads of Schools reviewed the results and decided on action items to take back to the nursing schools. The new NSU Leadership Group has confirmed that they wish to utilise the survey findings to inform their work for 2018 under the theme of Student Well Being Hauora. This report will be circulated to all schools of nursing and will be available on the NZNO website.

# Introduction

## The 2017 NZNO Nursing Student Survey

NZNO is the leading professional and industrial organisation of nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing over 48,000 nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora and health workers on a range of employment-related and professional issues. NZNO commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi is embedded in its constitution, and articulated through its relationship with Te Rūnanga o Aotearoa.

NZNO provides leadership, research and support for professional excellence in nursing, negotiates collective employment agreements on behalf of its members and collaborates with government and other agencies throughout the health sector. This report documents the results of a survey of nursing students who are NZNO members. A total of 922 students completed the survey.

## Context

This is the seventh biennial survey of NZNO nursing student members, and was undertaken between March and April 2017. The National Student Unit (NSU) is comprised of students enrolled in an undergraduate nursing/midwifery course or a programme leading to an initial New Zealand nursing/midwifery registration, and includes Enrolled Nurse students. The NSU exists to serve the interests of all student members of NZNO. The NSU is unique, as it is the only nursing student representative group in Aotearoa New Zealand and is the major political voice for nursing students today. The NSU committee aims to have 2 student representatives, from each school of nursing in Aotearoa New Zealand, one Māori taura (Te Runanga Taura, TRT) and one additional student.

## Methods

A national, anonymous, web-based survey investigating the health promoting and self-care knowledge and behaviours of student nurses was undertaken. The project used a partnership approach between all nursing schools in New Zealand, and NZNO student delegates from each school. The survey link was e-mailed to all NZNO nursing student members, was advertised in *Kai Tiaki Nursing New Zealand* journal, on the NZNO web site and, in some schools, on the nursing student blackboard and moodle web sites. Consent was implied by completion and submission of the survey questionnaire.

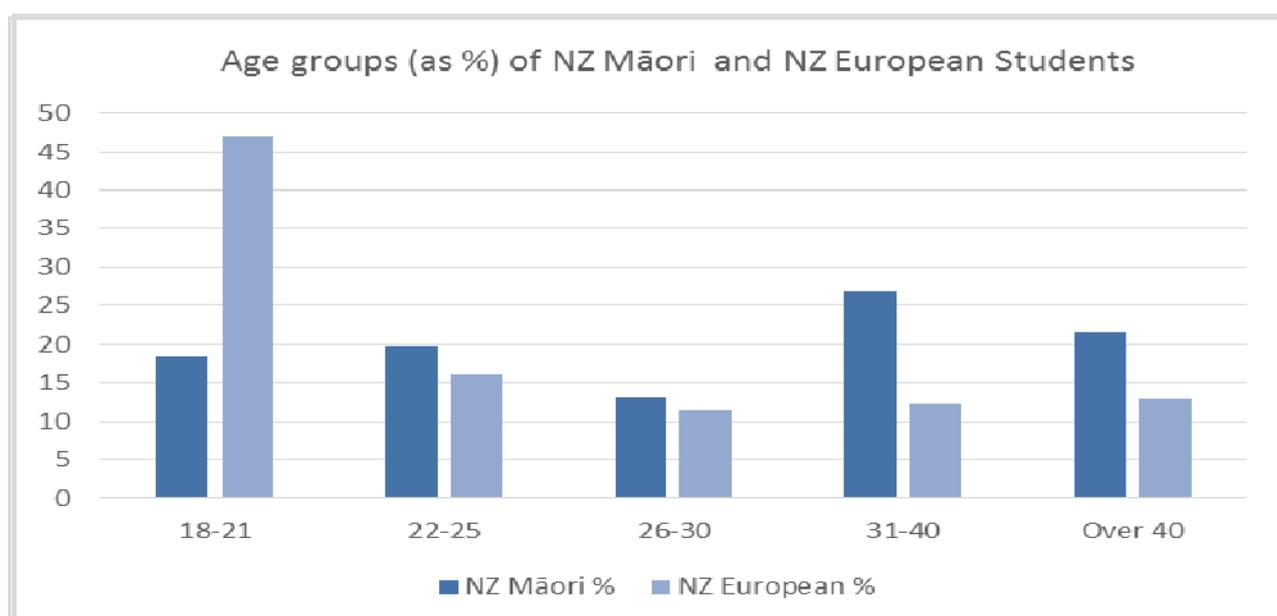
## Report structure

The results are given for all respondents, and numbers and percentages are shown to allow comparisons. Individual analyses exclude missing data, and this is indicated where applicable.

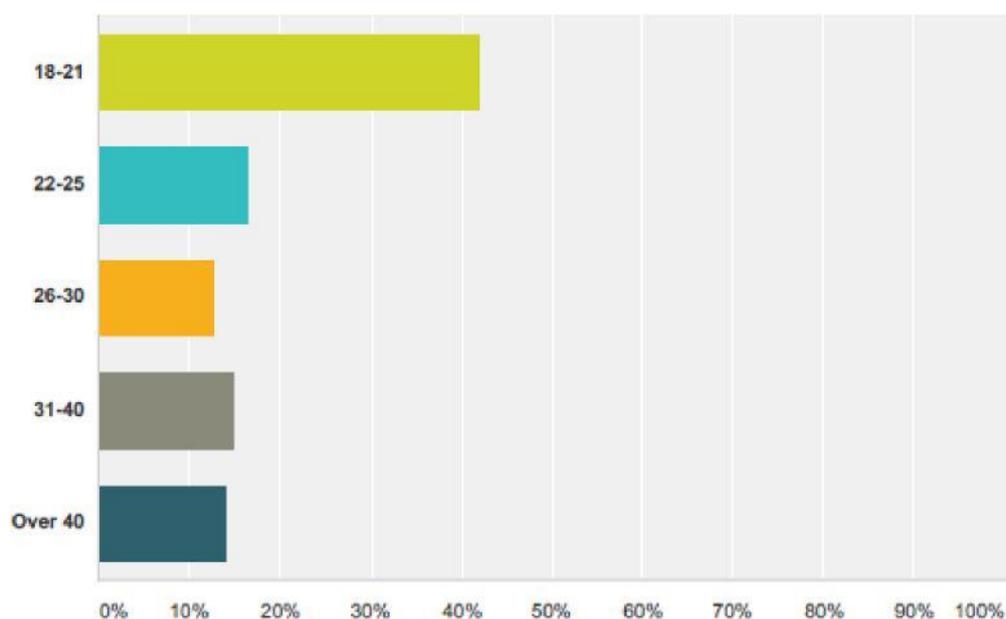
# Results

## Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Response % (n)
NZ Māori	16.6(152)
NZ European	70.0(614)
Other European	5.1(47)
Samoan	2.2(20)
Cook Island Māori	0.9(8)
Tongan	1.1(10)
Niuean	0.3(3)
Tokelauan	0.4(4)
Fijian	1.9(17)
Other Pacific	0.2(2)
South East Asian	3.5(32)
Chinese	3.5(32)
Indian	5.0(46)
Other Asian	5.0(46)
Other (please specify)	10.3(94)



## Age



The total student cohort (922) comprised a breakdown of 16.6 per cent NZ Māori, 70 per cent NZ European, 7.0 per cent Pasifika and 17 per cent Asian peoples. An additional 10 per cent of the students identified with other ethnicities. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one ethnicity, accordingly the total exceeds 100 per cent. Interestingly, while NZ European nursing students predominate in the youngest age group, the percentage of Māori nursing students exceeds the percentage of NZ European nursing students at every other age group. Students aged 18-21 years made up some 42 per cent of the student group, 16.7 per cent were aged 22-25 years, 12.8 per cent were aged 26-30 years, 14.8 per cent were aged 31-40 years and the remaining 128 students (14. per cent) were aged over 40 years. The majority of students were single (57.8 per cent), with 36.1 per cent of respondents indicating they were married, in a civil union or in a long-term de facto relationship. A third (32.6 per cent) of participants were responsible for children or whānau.

## Responsibility for Children /Whānau

The numbers and percentages of respondents in each category are shown below.

Responsible for children or whānau	Responses % (n)
Yes	32.64 (299)
No	67.36 (617)
Total	916

## Course of Study

Course of Study	Responses % (n)
Bachelor of Nursing	91.2 (824)
Enrolled Nurse/ Nurse Assistant	3.0 (27)
Bachelor of Health Science	0.7 (6)
Midwifery	0.1 (1)
Return to Nursing	0.6 (5)
Competency Assessment Programme	1.8 (16)
Postgraduate study	0.6 (5)
Other (please specify)	2.2 (20)
<b>Total</b>	904

More than 90 per cent of the student nurses were enrolled in the bachelor of nursing course. The respondents were fairly evenly spread across the first (38.6 per cent, second (26.7 per cent) and the third year of study (30.9 per cent). Around 20 per cent of respondents identified that most or virtually all of their course was delivered on-line. Similar numbers of students indicated that very little (38.3 per cent) or about half (41.3 per cent) of their course was available as online learning.

All the schools offering nursing training were represented in the survey. The 25 participants who selected 'Other' as their nursing school included those studying at Wesley Institute of Technology (5), Lonsdale Education Centre (4) and Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology (6).

## Nursing School

Nursing School	Responses % (n)
Northtec	5.6 (51)
Auckland University of Technology	3.2 (29)
University of Auckland	9.2 (83)
Unitec NZ	1.8 (16)
Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT)	7.3 (66)
Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)	5.4 (49)
Waiariki Institute of Technology	4.4 (40)
Eastern Institute of Technology	5.3 (48)
Western Institute of Technology, Taranaki	2.2 (20)
Massey University, Albany	3.7 (33)
Massey University, Wellington	9.9 (89)
Massey Uni. Palmerston North/Manawatu	3.1 (28)
University College of Learning (UCOL)	3.3 (30)
Whitireia Community Polytechnic	3.1 (28)
Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology	2.8 (25)
Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology	102 (92)
Otago Polytechnic	113 (102)
Southern Institute of Technology	4.0 (36)
Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi	1.6 (14)
Other (please specify)	2.7 (25)
<b>Total</b>	<b>903</b>

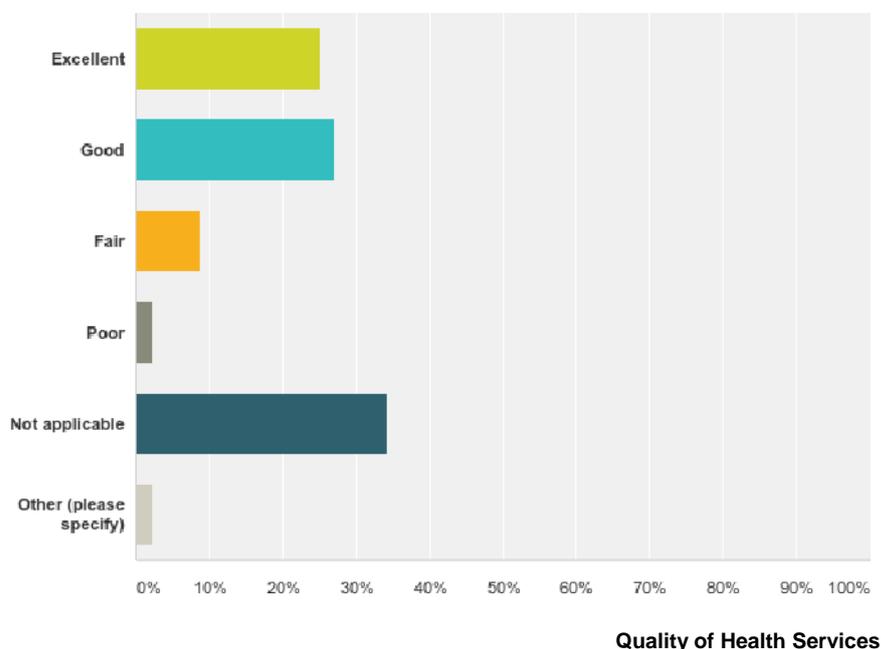
## Student Health Services

### Acceptability of Student Health Options

Student Health Options	Excellent (%)	Good (%)	Poor (%)	Very poor (%)	Total (n)
Information about services on your institution's web site	35.3	57.7	6.2	0.9	828
Availability of appointment times	26.5	59.2	12.9	1.6	815
Affordability	27.2	57.5	14.1	1.1	815
Quality of service	33.3	59.5	6.7	0.5	817

Nearly 85 per cent of participants had access to health care facilities on the nursing school campus. The acceptability of student health options was rated highly, with 93 per cent rating the information on the website and the quality of service as good or excellent. Similarly, 85 per cent of respondents rated the availability of appointment times and the affordability of the service as good or excellent. Of the 549 students who had accessed the student health service, 79 per cent rated the overall experience as good or excellent.

### If you accessed the health services, how would you rate your overall experience?

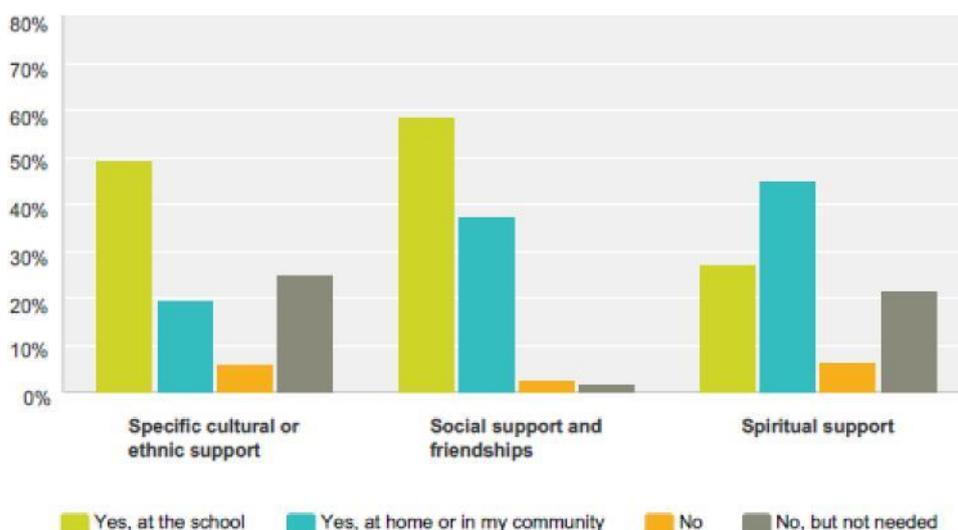


## Knowledge of how and where to get help

Specific Concern	Enough for my own needs (%)	Enough to advise others (%)	No (%)	Unsure (%)	Total (n)
Contraception and sexual health	61.1	54.9	6.2	2.4	846
Gender identity issues	48.8	27.0	21.4	14.9	840
Cultural and ethnic diversity	59.2	57.5	7.1	5.5	843
Help quitting smoking	41.6	59.8	9.2	6.7	844
Anxiety or stress	53.6	44.1	14.8	6.4	843
Other mental health problems	51.0	39.9	15.1	11.1	840
Other general health issues	58.3	45.7	7.1	8.4	844
Financial difficulties	48.5	20.7	27.0	13.7	844
Drug or alcohol concerns	52.3	43.8	13.3	8.9	838
Domestic violence	48.7	36.5	19.8	11.7	838
Bullying	48.5	42.7	17.7	10.7	838
Managing fatigue and shift work	40.0	22.3	33.7	14.9	842
Managing your emotional responses to patients or their relatives in distress	50.3	28.7	22.5	13.3	845
Managing conflict or anger	52.6	30.1	18.4	14.0	844
Managing team work and inter-personal dynamics	59.4	35.6	13.1	10.1	842

The survey investigated students' knowledge of how to access help on a range of issues. These are listed, along with the summary of responses, in the table above. An issue was regarded as a significant concern if at least 20 per cent of respondents did not know how or where to get help. Significant gaps were identified with respect to gender identity issues and with management of fatigue and shift work, with 36 per cent of respondents indicating they did not know how to get help for these concerns. In addition, 28 per cent of students did not know how to get help for financial difficulties.

## Access to Support Services



Students were asked about their access to various support services, including cultural or ethnic support, social support and friendships and spiritual support. The details of this support were not collected, but it was reassuring that the majority of students were able to find the support they needed at the nursing school or in their community, or did not require support.

## Is there someone at your school you could talk to if you had concerns about the following?

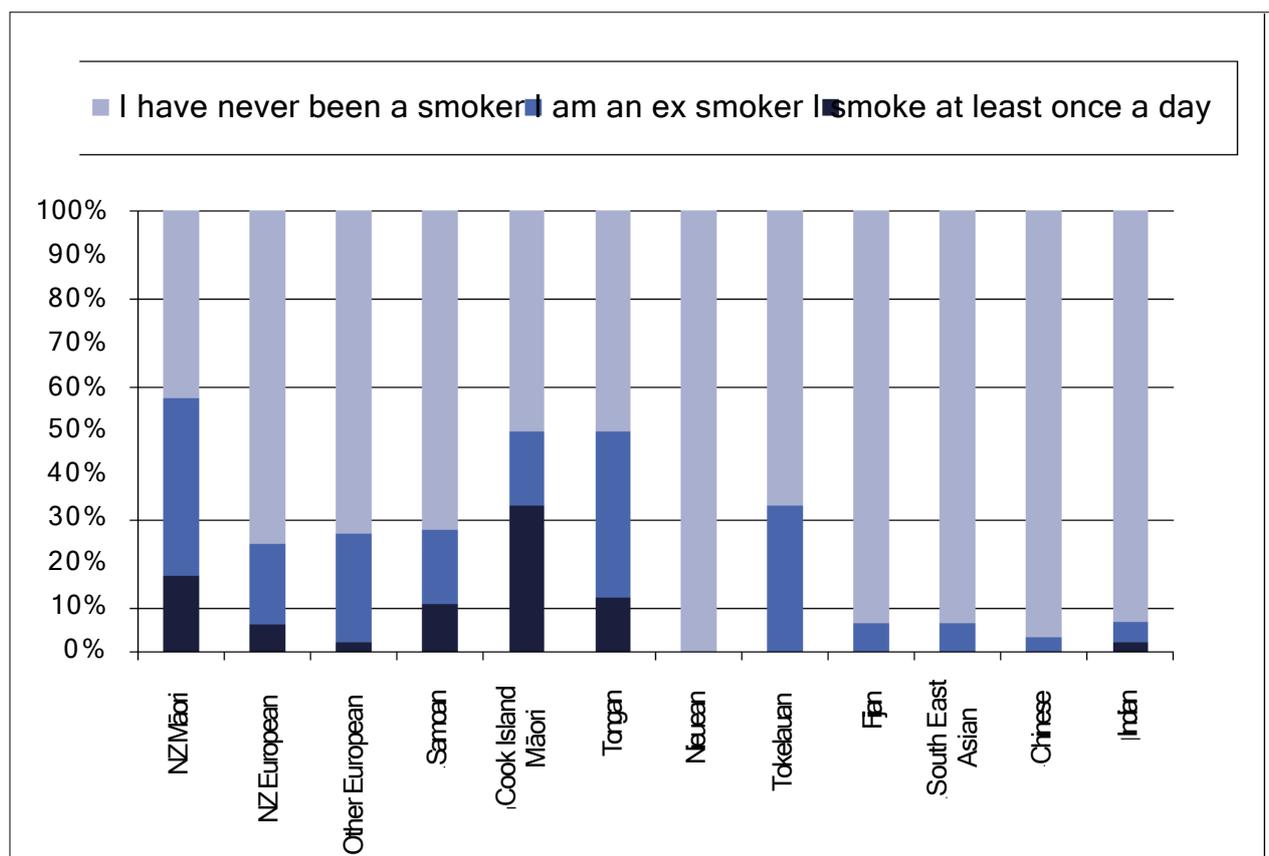
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Unsure (%)	Total (n)
Academic issues	91.7	3.7	4.6	850
Exam pressure	83.2	8.0	8.8	849
Problems with clinical placements	91.4	2.6	6.0	850
Personal or family issues	66.2	16.2	17.7	848
Social isolation	55.9	18.4	25.7	848

The majority of students knew who to approach to discuss concerns about coursework, including exam pressure and problems with clinical placements. However, 33 per cent of students did not know who they could talk to about personal or family issues, and 44 per cent of students did not know who they could approach to talk about social isolation.

### Which of the following best describes your smoking status?

Smoking status	Responses % (n)
I have never been a smoker	70.5 (599)
I am an ex-smoker	17.4 (148)
I smoke at least once a day	6.1 (52)
I smoke at least once a week	1.9 (16)
I smoke at least once a month	1.1 (9)
I smoke less often than once a month	3.1 (26)
<b>Total</b>	<b>850</b>

Of the 850 students who answered the question, 12.1 per cent smoke, though only 6.1 per cent smoke every day. 70.5 per cent had never smoked, and 17.4 per cent were ex-smokers. There are clear differences between smoking status and ethnicity. As previously shown, and in line with other data from the census and NZ Health survey, NZ Māori and Cook Island Māori, are most likely to smoke, and Asian students are least likely to smoke.



### Smoking Status and Ethnicity

### Smoking at school

Smoke free status of school	Responses % (n)
Our campus is entirely smoke free	56.8 (482)
Our campus is partially smoke free	26.1 (221)
I'm not sure about if and where you can smoke on campus	16.9 (144)
Students can use e-cigarettes on campus	1.2 (10)
Students cannot use e-cigarettes on campus	1.5 (13)
I'm not sure about if and where you can smoke e-cigarettes on campus	25.5 (216)
Other (please specify)	6.0 (51)
<b>Total Respondents: 848</b>	

There was a lack of clarity on the smoke-free status of schools and the extent to which enforcement occurred.

## Exercise facilities on campus

Exercise facilities	Responses % (n)
There is a gym I can join if I choose to	68.6 (575)
There are organised sports or dance I can join if I choose to	32.5 (272)
The opening times of exercise facilities on campus are a barrier to me doing more	8.5 (71)
The costs of exercise facilities on campus are a barrier to me doing more	17.8 (149)
There is access to swimming facilities if I choose to	6.2 (52)
I think there are ample exercise opportunities for students who want them	23.6 (198)
I feel there should be more healthy exercise opportunity to students at our school	33.9 (284)
Other (please specify)	10.6 (89)
<b>Total Respondents: 838</b>	

Two thirds of the students were able to join a gym on campus, and one third said they could participate in organised sports or dance, if they chose to. However, a third of respondents believed more opportunities for healthy exercise should be provided.

## Healthy food options

Healthy food options	Responses % (n)
There is a canteen on campus I can buy healthy food if I choose to	68.8 (582)
There are convenient shops nearby I can buy healthy food if I choose to	48.8 (410)
Sugary drinks are available on campus	66.2 (560)
Drinking water is freely available on campus	78.3 (662)
Many of the food and snack choices on offer are not very healthy	40.1 (339)
Other (please specify)	8.7 (74)
<b>Total Respondents: 846</b>	

More than two thirds of the students indicated healthy food was available on campus, and around half of the students were able to buy healthy foods close, by if they chose. While two thirds of schools had sugary drinks available, 78 per cent of the students were able to get drinking water on campus.

## Other issues raised.

Participants were invited to make any recommendations or suggestions at the conclusion of the survey.

These included:

- The cost and availability of healthy food options on campus.

While most students acknowledged there were healthy options available, the comments suggested these were more expensive and this resulted in less-healthy and cheaper options being selected.

- Cost of pre-placement health check

It was felt this cost was an out-of-pocket expense for students which could be incorporated into student fees or done by the course nurses.

- availability of lockers or storage space on the campus, eg at the library;  more organised sports clubs;
- greater advertising of student health options in the library or common rooms;  more help available to those who were socially isolated; and
- more teaching around management of stress levels and coping strategies and greater emphasis on self care throughout the course.

**Endorsed by CEO: 15/01/18.**

**Principal author:** Dr Jinny Willis

**Correspondence to:** [researchers@nzno.org.nz](mailto:researchers@nzno.org.nz)

**Mission statement**

NZNO is committed to the representation of members and the promotion of nursing and midwifery. NZNO embraces te Tiriti o Waitangi and works to improve the health status of all peoples of Aotearoa/ New Zealand through participation in health and social policy development.

© 2017 This material is copyright to the New Zealand Nurses Organisation.

Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced by any process, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the written permission of the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO), PO Box 2128, Wellington 6140.

ISBN: 978-1-877461-97-2