



Trust and Confidence in Members of Parliament compared with local councillors, lawyers, journalists and others such as those working in the Ambulance Service, the Fire Service and the Police

The issue:

With the election later this year, we decided it would be a good time to repeat a poll to measure the level of trust and confidence that New Zealanders have in their parliamentary representatives compared with a range of other professions and occupations. The poll was conducted between 17 May and 10 June 2017.

This poll was first run in July 2013 and again, two years later, in May 2015. Each survey was completed by telephone and involved a nationally representative sample of n=500 New Zealanders, 18 years of age and over.

The poll question:

The following question was asked:

Now I would like to ask your opinion on a number of occupations that are often in the news. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means 'no trust and confidence' and 10 means 'full trust and confidence,' how would you rate your trust and confidence in the following:

- *Members of Parliament*
- *Local council members*
- *School teachers*
- *Doctors and nurses*
- *Lawyers*
- *Journalists*
- *People who work for the government*
- *The Police*
- *The Fire Service*
- *The Ambulance Service*



Key results:

The graph overleaf shows the level of trust and confidence respondents have in the various professions and occupations, with a column for 2013, 2015 and 2017. Respondents were considered to have **trust and confidence** in each profession/occupation, if they rated it between 7 and 10 on the 11-point scale.

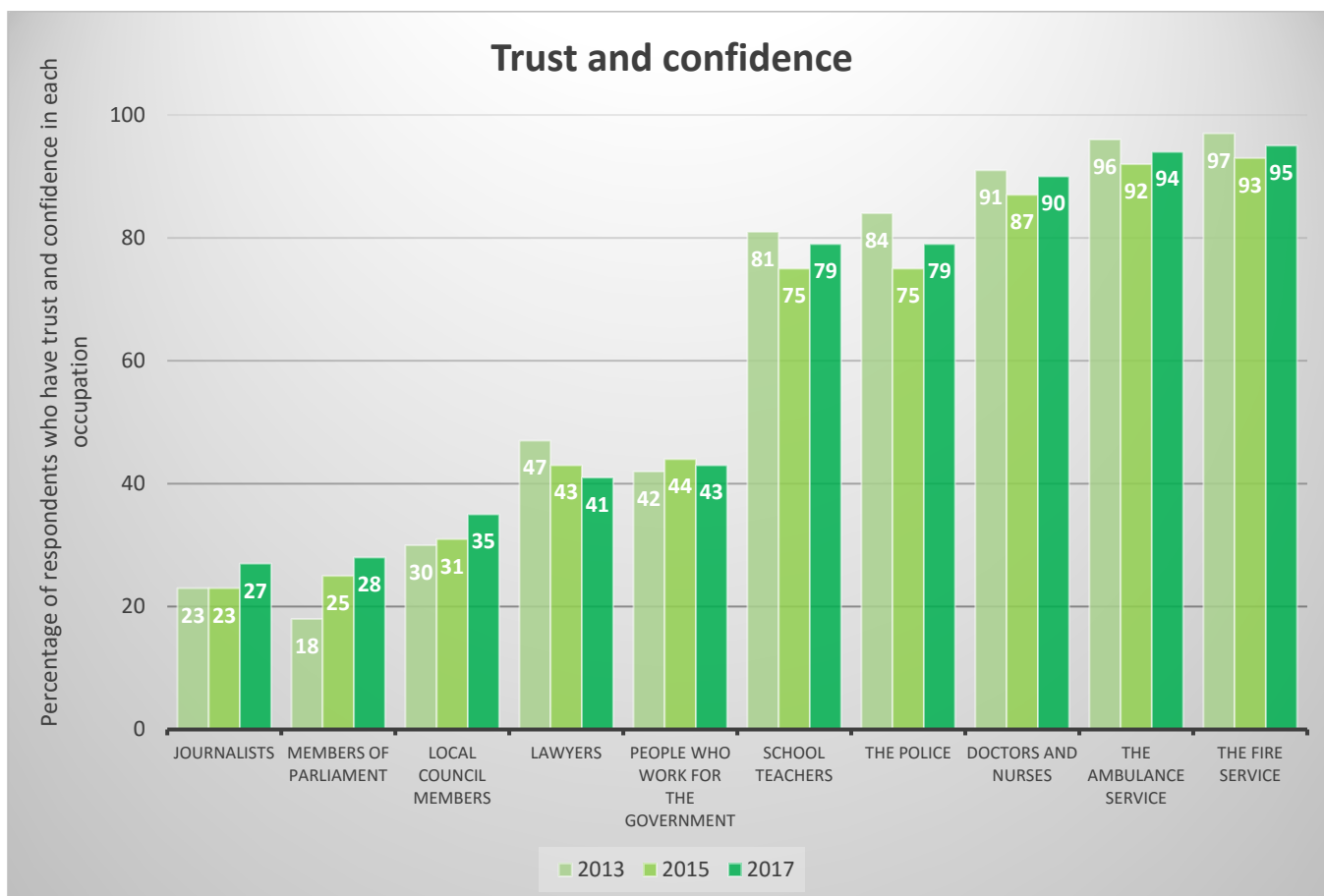
As can be seen from the graph, the professions/occupations fall into **two** groups:

1. A group who have the trust and confidence of **most** New Zealanders (i.e. 75 percent or more).
2. A group who have the trust and confidence of **only a few** New Zealanders (i.e. less than 50 percent).

Relatively **few** New Zealanders have trust and confidence in Members of Parliament (28 percent), on par with journalists (27 percent). In contrast, those in medical and emergency professions such as the Fire Service and the Ambulance Service have the trust and confidence of the large majority of people (95 percent, and 94 percent respectively).

However, when the current results are compared to previous results, the **only** significant difference is in relation to Members of Parliament. At 28 percent, more people now have trust and confidence in Members of Parliament than was the case in 2013 (18 percent).

Figure 1: Trust and confidence in professions/occupations





These results have been analysed by a number of demographic variables, including age, gender, income, and region.

While there were **no** significant differences by demographic sub groups in regard to New Zealanders' trust and confidence in Members of Parliament, there were differences with regard to other professions and occupations. For example, respondents from the South Island are significantly less likely than those in the Lower/Central North Island to have high trust and confidence in journalists, lawyers, and public servants.

Comment:

“These results reflect little major change over the years; not that we would expect to see much change in this regard. However, what is interesting is the improvement in New Zealanders' trust and confidence in MPs. We can only speculate why this has happened”, said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatellis.

The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 18 years and over was conducted by telephone between 17 May and 10 June 2017. The maximum margin of error is +/- 5.6 percent (at the 95 percent confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of the general population of New Zealand. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organization, but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of New Zealanders' opinions about topical issues.

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TABULATIONS

Results by demographic sub-groups

Table 1: Trust and confidence in occupations, by age group

	Base =	Total	18-34 years	35-54 years	55 years and over
		500	30	137	333
		%	%	%	%
Journalists		27	37	21	30
Members of Parliament		28	27	24	33
Local council members		35	30	36	37
Lawyers		41	44	35	47
People who work for the government		43	57	41	40
School teachers		79	70	82	79
The Police		79	70	79	83
Doctors and nurses		90	90	85	95
The Ambulance Service		94	90	92	97
The Fire Service		95	93	94	97

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Table 2: Trust and confidence in occupations, by gender

	Base =	Total	Male	Female
		500	242	258
		%	%	%
Journalists		27	25	28
Members of Parliament		28	29	27
Local council members		35	31	39
Lawyers		41	41	41
People who work for the government		43	46	41
School teachers		79	78	79
The Police		79	83	76
Doctors and nurses		90	89	90
The Ambulance Service		94	95	93
The Fire Service		95	96	95

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.

Table 3: Trust and confidence in occupations, by income

	Base =	Total	Under \$40,000	\$40,000-\$80,000	\$80,000 and over	Don't know/ Refused
		500	155	111	164	70
		%	%	%	%	%
Journalists		27	32	24	23	30
Members of Parliament		28	27	31	28	25
Local council members		35	41	42	28	33
Lawyers		41	43	46	39	36
People who work for the government		43	42	49	43	35
School teachers		79	75	89	77	73
The Police		79	78	89	73	88
Doctors and nurses		90	87	95	89	85
The Ambulance Service		94	92	100	91	97
The Fire Service		95	90	100	96	96

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.



Table 4: Trust and confidence in occupations, by region

	Base =	Total	Upper North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
		500	217	158	123
		%	%	%	%
Journalists		27	28	32	15
Members of Parliament		28	28	31	22
Local council members		35	34	38	32
Lawyers		41	41	49	29
People who work for the government		43	41	54	29
School teachers		79	77	83	76
The Police		79	75	81	85
Doctors and nurses		90	88	89	92
The Ambulance Service		94	89	98	98
The Fire Service		95	92	98	98

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.