

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kaitango Whakaahua

Print Page

Description

Photographers take photographs of people, places, products or events.



Stephen Goodenough taking a photograph

He Whakamarama



Mahi ai ki te tango whakaahua o nga tangata, nga wahi, nga hua me nga mahi e mahia ana.

Alternative Titles

- Photojournalist
- Press Photographer
- Commercial Photographer
- Portrait Photographer
- Wedding Photographer

Tasks and Duties

Photographers:

- discuss ideas with clients
- look for ideas for pictures
- decide which method of photography and what equipment to use
- arrange camera, lights, the setting and their subjects

- take photographs
- may develop and print photographs
- may scan photographs into a computer
- may restore old photographs
- may mount and frame photographs
- may set up exhibitions
- may run their own business.



Adjusting a photograph using a computer

Personal Requirements

Skills

Photographers need technical and problem-solving skills, as well as good communication and time-management skills. They use a variety of equipment, such as cameras, flashes and computers, so they need good technical and creative skills. If photographers run their own business, they also need good business skills.



Viewing negatives via a television screen

Knowledge

Photographers need to know about cameras, lenses and films, and the different effects that can be achieved by their uses. They also need to understand how to control artificial light, such as from a studio, and natural light. Photographers need to know about film developing, up-to-date methods and equipment, and styles or trends in photography and art. A knowledge of basic maths is also helpful.



"A lot of my clients now want photos taken using a digital camera, so you have to keep up with new technology. But you have to make sure you find out how the picture's going to be used, such as for a brochure or billboard, so that you use the right equipment."

Stephen Goodenough, Photographer

Personal Qualities

Photographers should be:

- patient
- creative
- able to work under pressure
- practical and disciplined
- self-confident and self-motivated
- able to accept criticism
- able to make people feel relaxed and at ease
- well-prepared when doing work on location.

It is also important for photographers to have an eye for detail.

Physical Requirements

Photographers need to have good sense of colour, good hand-eye co-ordination and good reflexes. Physical strength is an advantage, because photographic equipment can be heavy to carry.



"I have to do a substantial amount of weight training, because some of the lenses that I use are nearly taller than me, and the tripod is almost as tall as me!"

Annette Dew, Photographer

How to Enter the Job

Secondary Education

Four years of secondary school education including subjects such as English, photography economics, art history and art are preferred to enter photography.

Tertiary Education

A tertiary qualification in photography, art or design is useful.

Related courses:

[Arts, Craft and Design \(General\)](#)
[Photography](#)
[Visual Arts and Communication](#)

Take off to tertiary!

[Take off to tertiary!](#) - information and advice to help with study or training decision-making.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority:

[Design](#)
[Photographic Imaging](#)
[Photography](#)

Entry Requirements

It is useful to have a portfolio of work before entering the job.

Useful Experience

Useful experience includes:

- amateur photography
- darkroom work
- work as a photographic assistant
- work as a television or motion picture camera operator
- design work or courses
- business or computer work
- writing work.



"When you're just starting out, it's a really good learning experience to put your work into the NZ Professional Photographers national competition and watch the judging."

Stephen Goodenough, Photographer

Training on the Job

Many skills are gained on the job. Some employers run trainee schemes and photographers may also attend courses and seminars for motivational purposes and to gather new ideas. It is also important for photographers to keep up-to-date with new techniques and technology.



"If you do a photography course with a good reputation, you'll probably learn a lot more in two years than you would if you went out and tried to work for somebody. You're also more likely to

learn good habits."

Stephen Goodenough, Photographer

Working Conditions

Work Places and Travel

Photographers work indoors in studios and darkrooms and outdoors in different locations. They may travel locally or out of town to take photographs and to attend seminars and conferences.



Stephen Goodenough in a studio with clients

Equipment

Equipment photographers use includes:

- display albums or a portfolio to show clients or employers their work
- cameras, lenses, filters and films
- lighting equipment and tripods
- film processor, enlarger and photographic paper
- darkroom chemicals
- cars
- computers and scanners.

They may use a ladder for different photographic viewpoints.

"There's always a lot of gear to take when you're working outdoors or outside the studio. You might have bags with lights, bags with tripods and various other camera equipment."

Esther Bunning, Photographer

Workplace Conditions

Photographers have to work to deadlines. They often work outdoors in all weather conditions. Safety precautions need to be taken with chemicals used for developing photographs.

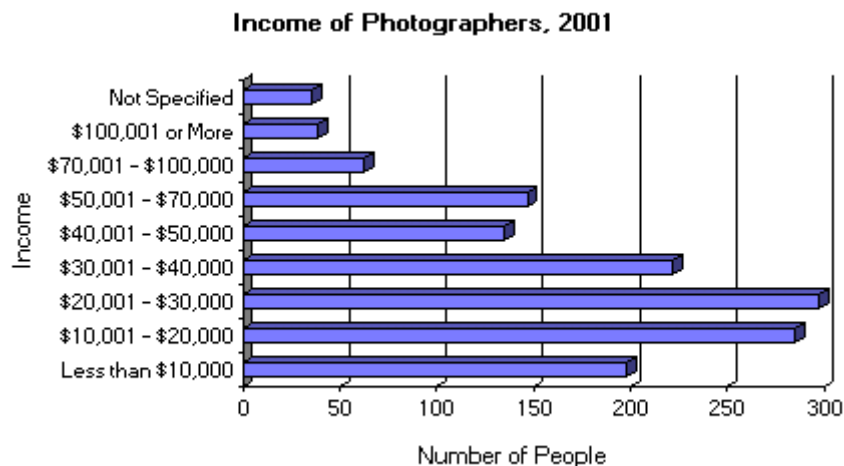
Employment Conditions

Hours

Photographers work long, irregular hours, and usually work overtime. Clients are often not available during normal working hours, which means photography sessions have to be run in the evenings and weekends. Some photographers may also do shift work.

Salary

Many photographers are self-employed and do freelance or contract work, so salary depends on the success of their business.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

[Interpreting Charts](#)

Contact with People

Photographers usually work independently. They may work with a variety of people, including art directors, journalists and editors, celebrities, public officials and the general public. They may interact with clients, photographic laboratories and suppliers. Some photographers in a training situation may supervise small groups.



"Some of the best work I've had has been through word-of-mouth from photographers working in other centres. It's good if we can all work in together."

Stephen Goodenough, Photographer

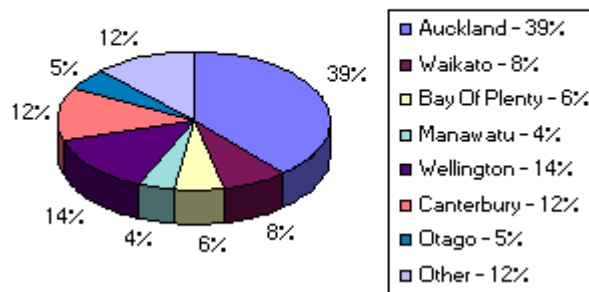
Job Market

Market Details

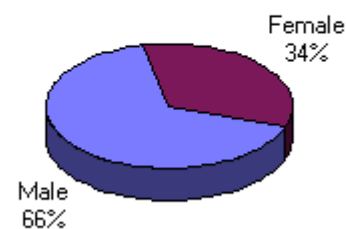
These statements and statistics are based on information available from Statistics New Zealand about photographer occupations. Charts and statistics on photographers include data photographic sales assistants.

- 1,422 people were employed as photographers in 2001
- 77% were employed full time
- 34% were female
- The highest proportion of people were employed in the Auckland (39%), Wellington (14%) and Canterbury (12%) regions.

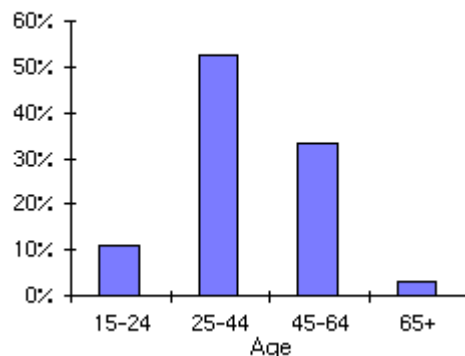
Regional Location of Photographers, 2001



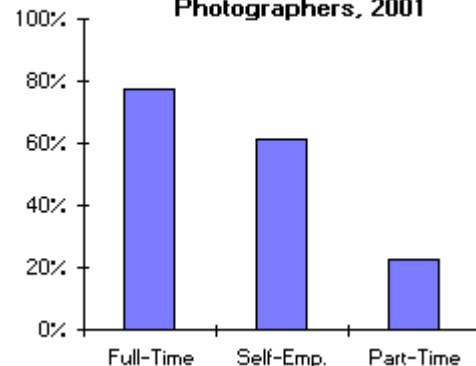
Gender of Photographers, 2001



Age of Photographers, 2001



Type of Employment of Photographers, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand

[Interpreting Charts](#)

Job Outlook

The outlook for photographers looks average and the number of people working in this occupation is expected to remain stable over the next two to three years.

The role of photographer is changing with the arrival of digital imaging and computer technology. This has enabled photographers to learn new skills and has cut down the amount of manual work, such as film processing, that made up a large proportion of their work. New technology also means it is more economical

for photographers to send out film processing to specialised laboratories.

Despite these technological advances, there is still a demand for quality images, particularly for images used in marketing. This is because the world is becoming more design conscious, which is creating the need for competitive product marketing. As a result, there is still demand for photographers with design skills who can produce quality photographs.

Technological improvements to camera equipment, particularly the increased range of automatic functions on cameras and software packages have also reduced demand for the skills of photographers as they have made the technical side of photography easier for the average person.

The use of royalty free compact discs (CDs) with images of New Zealand has also impacted on work available for photographers. As these CDs are readily available for use as promotional material for New Zealand, particularly by advertising agencies, there are fewer people commissioning 'Kiwi' images. However, some photographers have developed a niche for themselves by taking pictures of New Zealand images and selling them overseas, where there is a market for photographs as artworks. Increasingly, the Internet can be used for this; however, photographers still need business and marketing skills to promote their work.

The development of new technology has also led to issues around security of copyright. There can be difficulty in retaining ownership of images as proofs can be programmed into a computer or the Internet and used easily. In New Zealand, whoever commissions an image has the copyright, which limits the potential earnings for photographers. However, photographers are currently trying to implement terms, conditions and licensing agreements to prevent this.

Opportunities to be taken on as a trainee photographer with employers, such as newspapers, are now less common as employers prefer to hire people who already have the skills and experience. Many photographers start off working as film processors, but improved technology has reduced the need for people in this area making this career path difficult. As a result, it is now more important to have formal qualifications from a tertiary provider to gain photographer positions.

Turnover is low among photographers working on a freelance basis or with well-established businesses. However, new photographers coming into the industry, both freelance and those starting a business, are finding there is a need to supplement their income with other work until they become established. Freelance photographers also need to be versatile as there are limited opportunities for specialising in one area.

(Written 13/11/2001 - Updated 19/02/2003)

"The industry faces challenges because of changes in technology; however, there is increasing demand for the design element in photography. As a result, it's becoming more important to have tertiary qualifications because it's the quality of the image that makes the difference."

Hugh Perry, NZIPP (Executive Director)

Regional Market Details

[Northland](#) / [Auckland](#) / [Waikato](#) / [Bay of Plenty](#) / [Gisborne](#) / [Hawke's Bay](#) / [Taranaki](#) / [Manawatu-Wanganui](#) / [Wellington](#) / [Tasman](#) / [Nelson](#) / [Marlborough](#) / [West Coast](#) / [Canterbury](#) / [Otago](#) / [Southland](#)

Northland:

The number of photographers employed in the Northland region is expected to increase moderately over the

next three to five years. The number of people using specialist photographic services, including family portraits and wedding photographs, is increasing and an increase in tourist numbers has also created employment opportunities for photographers.

Technology is impacting on the role and skill requirements of photographers as imagery can now be manipulated quickly and efficiently using computers.

Professional photographers are often self-employed and work full-time, although they may hire other photographers as required. The work is sporadic, and depending on the area of specialisation, can be seasonal. Turnover among self-employed photographers and those employed in large laboratories and studios is low.

(Written 31/03/2002)

Auckland:

The number of photographers employed in the Auckland region is expected to decrease moderately over the next three to five years. Employment opportunities are influenced by changing technology. Cameras that are technically simple and easy to use are now easy to obtain and are able to produce high quality work. This is resulting in amateur photographers competing with professional photographers for contracts, particularly in social photographic work such as weddings. Also, the development of digital photography now allows photographic images to be downloaded from image databanks on the Internet, decreasing the amount of work commissioned.

The majority of photographers work full-time and are self-employed. Turnover in the Auckland region is low and may be due to the amount of money required to initially set up as a photographer.

(Written 04/03/2003)

Waikato:

Employment opportunities for photographers in the Waikato region are expected to remain stable over the next three to five years. Most photographers are self-employed and there are a small number of jobs in newspapers. Digital photographic technology has affected the industry and some claim that it has decreased the market for photographers. For example, friends might be asked to take wedding photos using a digital camera rather than employ a professional photographer.

In the Waikato region it is difficult to enter this occupation and become successfully established as a self-employed photographer. The time and expense needed to establish a client base are major barriers. In addition, newspapers employ only a small number of photographers and job vacancies are rare as turnover is low.

(Written 01/10/2003)

Bay of Plenty:

The number of photographers employed in the Bay of Plenty region is expected to remain stable or decline moderately over the next three to five years. Employment opportunities in photography are influenced by a photographer's ability to offer customers a point of difference or speciality service, the need for a professional service and the level of growth in tourism in the region.

Currently, opportunities are stable or declining as the introduction of technology such as digital cameras and computers is allowing people and businesses to develop and produce their own photographs rather than use the services of a professional. In addition, photographic apprenticeship numbers are not increasing in

the region.

Turnover among photographers in the Bay of Plenty region is low, as most have established businesses. However, some people entering the industry do not remain long in this occupation as it is competitive and often difficult to establish a successful business.

(Written 15/11/2002)

Nelson:

The number of photographers employed in the Nelson region is expected to grow moderately over the next three to five years due to population growth and an upturn in the economy of the region. Increasing numbers of people are also entering the profession as they attempt to turn a hobby into a full-time job.

Turnover among photographers in the Nelson region is low, and most photographers are self-employed and work full-time.

(Written 25/03/2002)

Canterbury:

The number of photographers employed in the Canterbury region is expected to remain stable or decrease moderately over the next three to five years.

Job numbers for photographers are influenced by a number of factors including relocation of large companies, competition, tourism, and changing technology. A number of advertising agencies and large photographic companies have relocated outside the region, which means fewer advertising contracts are available to commercial photographers in Canterbury. In addition, contracts often have lower budgets than in previous years.

The increasing popularity of digital cameras also means less work for professional photographers, because people are able to reproduce photographs and scan images on to software themselves. This technology also allows companies to produce photographic images in-house. Consequently, photographers are often competing for work based on price, as opposed to quality.

Employment opportunities may arise in auxiliary services, such as laboratory work or photographic shop work. It is important for photographers to understand business and marketing principles, as well as have photographic knowledge and skills, to remain competitive in the marketplace.

Photographers tend to be self-employed, and some have other sources of income. Turnover among photographers in the Canterbury region varies. Most experienced photographers who have a passion for the work stay in the job for some time.

(Written 04/11/2002)

Current Vacancies



[Physical Science and Engineering Associated Professionals](#)



[KiwiCareers Job Vacancy Links](#)

Personal Profile

Stephen Goodenough



The highlight of Stephen Goodenough's career recently has been competing against some of the country's leading photographers in a major national professional photography competition. With over 1,200 images being judged, Stephen came out on top and was awarded Photographer of the Year 2002.

Stephen remembers being very interested in art at school and was encouraged by his high school art teacher to go to polytech and do design. "I did a two-year graphic design course, and became really keen on photography while doing that component

of the course."

Having secured a job in a photography business, Stephen specialised in processing black and white photographs. He eventually started up his own processing business, and gradually built up enough experience to take a range of pictures for his growing client base. He has now been freelancing since Christmas 2000, and still gets photographers sending him their work to print.

Stephen started out doing mostly wedding photography, but found that quite a competitive area, so decided to concentrate on commercial photography. He says he likes the variety, as he gets to do a range of photos. This includes photos for company profiles; product catalogues, such as clothing catalogues, including studio shots of garments and on location with models; advertising campaigns; or food and editorial work for magazines. "I like getting work that's challenging - I've done television and newspaper commercial shoots for big international clients that involved a lot of organisation, like finding talent and arranging the location."

"Working for yourself gives you a lot of freedom", but you tend not to turn a lot of work away and can get busy. It's easy to get burnt out, so you have to plan your days and make time for yourself. You also have to make sure you plan jobs because it's easy to get caught out. For example, if you don't estimate enough film or allow enough time."

Stephen warns that the work can be irregular. "You might get the odd large job that's booked in weeks ahead, but quite often work doesn't come that way; a lot of advertising agencies leave things to the last minute." When it is quiet, Stephen tries to catch up on things like updating his website and doing paperwork.

"Another thing with working for yourself, is you've really got to go out and sell yourself to advertising agencies so they know who you are and what you can do. I've now got clients in Auckland, Wellington, Australia, and London, but always need to market actively.

"When you take a photo, you have to try and figure out how an idea is best conveyed in print. Clients often have definite views about what they want, but many give you the leeway to do your own thing particularly after you've done a few jobs for them." Stephen finds it satisfying to see finished work in print, and seeing clients happy with the service he provides. "You can always see ways you could have improved, but you've got to be careful that you don't get too critical, or too hung up about it."

Annette Dew



Annette Dew is a press photographer who enjoys the thrill and high pressure that newspapers bring, and has always had an interest in newspapers and photography.

"I used to write the athletics results for our school newspaper. It was a weekend and holiday job, which gave me about \$60 a month and that was great when I was 14. It got me out there doing stuff.

"I knew a lady who worked at the provincial newspaper and I started doing some part-time work for her while I was still at school. I helped her out with the photo library, where I filed photographs and negatives. I did that job in the weekends and on my days off.

"I had my own darkroom set up at home while I was at high school. I didn't know much about it at all, but it was fun learning. I had my first camera when I was 10, which was a Kodak 'Whippersnapper'. I lived in the country, so I went around photographing my chickens! The photos were never very good, because the camera wasn't very good."

By the time she was 16, Annette had evolved from chickens to all sorts of things. "I went out on jobs with the photographers and gained some really good experience, and I was able to get a really good portfolio together."

Eventually a technician job came up at the paper and Annette decided to apply for it. "The editor at the time said he would employ me as a junior photographer on a month's trial. Then when a photographer's job came up, I was employed on a three-month trial, and they kept me on."

Annette gains a sense of achievement from getting her pictures on the front page. "I like to think of myself as a people photographer - that is what I like to do best."

Further Information

Relevant Contacts

- [Advertising and Illustrative Photographers' Association Inc](#)
- [NZ Institute of Professional Photography](#)
- [Tautai Contemporary Pacific Arts Trust](#)

Related Jobs

- [Artist/Craftsperson](#)
- [Artistic Director](#)
- [Graphic Designer](#)
- [Illustrator](#)
- [Interior Designer](#)
- [Photographic Processor](#)
- [Print Journalist](#)
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