



Wellbeing of homeowners and renters

2022 Quality of Life survey snapshot

Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland

Auckland Council technical report 2023/6*

Auckland homeowners and renters

The 2022 Quality of Life survey found significant differences in reported wellbeing among Aucklanders who owned their own home and those who were renting, either from a private landlord or as a social renter.

Owner-occupiers were more likely to report positive overall quality of life than private and social renters. They were also more likely to report positively on a number of indicators, including financial, physical, and emotional wellbeing.

There were notable relationships between respondents' age and whether they owned or rented the home they lived in, which likely have also contributed to some of the results.

This is a snapshot of findings. Please refer to the next page and to the full report for details.

Renting and wellbeing

Worsening housing affordability has led to the emergence of renting as a long-term tenure option for many people, especially in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland. According to the 2018 Census, over 40 per cent of Auckland households were renting their home. The burden of housing costs on renters tends to be heavy and the quality of rental homes is generally lower than that of owner-occupied homes.

Existing research shows differences in wellbeing between owner-occupiers and renters. Owner-occupiers tend to experience various benefits more so than renters, such as tenure security, financial, health and social benefits.

In view of the evidence, the Auckland Plan 2050 includes a strategic direction to shift the region towards a housing system that provides secure, high-quality, and affordable homes for all, regardless of tenure.

Rangahau te Korou o te Ora/The Quality of Life (QoL) survey

The QoL survey is a collaborative local government project initiated 20 years ago, in response to the impacts of urbanisation on the wellbeing of New Zealand residents and communities. The survey is undertaken every two years. The project provides a rich data source, which was analysed to understand the relationship between housing tenure and wellbeing.

The 2022 survey collected data from 7518 New Zealanders aged 18 years and over, of whom 2612 were Auckland residents. Survey fieldwork took place from March to June 2022.

During analysis, wellbeing was explored across financial wellbeing, housing suitability and affordability, subjective wellbeing, and connectedness to community.

*Full reference: Prakash, A. (2023). *Wellbeing among Auckland homeowners and renters: results from the Quality of Life survey*. Auckland Council technical report, TR2023/6.

Findings

Key differences based on housing tenure:

- Owner-occupiers were more likely than renters to have access to affordable and healthy homes, and to report having enough money to meet their everyday needs.
- Owner-occupiers were more likely to report better physical and mental health than renters.
- Private renters, on the other hand, were more likely to report experiencing frequent stress that had a negative effect on them in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- There is an emerging picture of isolation and lack of connection to their local community experienced by private renters, more so than other tenure types. Renters were more likely to report experiences of frequent loneliness. Private renters were also less likely to agree their local area was a great place to live and that they were proud of the look and feel of their local area.

The overall picture for owner-occupiers was positive, but more nuanced when broken down into the four groups comprising it:

- More positive wellbeing was reported by **those who owned their home outright** or whose home was **held by a family trust** – these groups tended to be aged 50 years and over
- **Those who owned their home with a mortgage** reported lower wellbeing in relation to financial indicators like income adequacy and housing affordability
- **Those living in a parental/family-owned home** (typically aged under 40 years) often reported worse wellbeing, sometimes at levels comparable to private renters.

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Sample details

The majority (71%) of Auckland respondents were classified as owner-occupiers, 20 per cent were renting from a private landlord, and 7 per cent were renting from a social housing provider.

The overall owner-occupier category was made up of four groups: owning with a mortgage (44% of the owner occupiers), owning without a mortgage (21%), home held by a family trust (10%), and those living in a parental/family-owned home (25%).

There were notable relationships between respondents' age and whether they owned or rented their home. Respondents aged under 40 made up a large proportion of those living in parental/family-owned homes, while those aged 50 and over were most prevalent among family trust holders and those owning their home outright (i.e. without a mortgage).

Implications

Improving protections for renters, including their ability to access healthy, secure, and affordable housing, should be prioritised for policymakers. This generally falls under the mandate of central government, but Auckland Council are using several broader levers:

- Partnering with central government on affordable housing initiatives
- Advocating to central government on behalf of Aucklanders
- Providing regulatory services, and planning and funding infrastructure
- Increase housing supply on surplus council land
- Helping to inform future policy through ongoing research.

In this way, we may start to achieve fair and equitable outcomes for all Aucklanders, regardless of whether they can consolidate enough wealth to purchase their own home.