Social Cohesion in Auckland: Results from the Quality of Life Survey

Ashleigh Prakash

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Dr Ashleigh Prakash

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Executive summary

The importance of social cohesion

The world is undergoing a period of rapid and accelerating change (due to factors like globalisation, migration, climate change and natural disasters, and technological advances), with potentially destabilising consequences for the connections binding communities together. Fostering social cohesion in this context is vital to facilitating a unified approach to the challenges we face.

Auckland Council is committed to enhancing social cohesion in Auckland, as outlined in the Auckland Plan 2050 and Ngā Hapori Momoho/Thriving Communities strategy. Efforts to improve social cohesion will help strengthen the ties needed to enhance societal resilience to current and future challenges, facilitate all Aucklanders to participate in society and democracy, and improve Auckland as an attractive place to live for current residents and future migrants.

Although there are many ways to conceptualise it, most definitions (including the one used in this report) adopt five dimensions as a basis for understanding social cohesion: belonging, participation, recognition, legitimacy, and inclusion.

This report

Rangahau te Korou o te Ora/The Quality of Life project is a long-running biennial local government survey in Aotearoa New Zealand that aims to measure perceptions of wellbeing of New Zealand residents and communities in urban areas. Although not specifically designed to measure social cohesion, the survey gathers important information about key indicators (belonging, participation, recognition, and legitimacy) at the individual and neighbourhood levels and, therefore, provides an opportunity to explore differences in perceptions of social inclusion and cohesion.

This report presents results from the 2022 Quality of Life survey and focusses on results for Auckland. The 2022 survey collected data in March to June 2022, from a total of 7518 New Zealanders aged 18 and over, of whom 2612 were Auckland residents.

Data were primarily analysed using a socioeconomic lens, based on measures of material deprivation and self-reported income adequacy. Socioeconomic circumstances are a key driver of social cohesion, as relative socioeconomic disadvantage can lead to economic and social exclusion and weaken social cohesion. In line with this view, analysis focussed on differences based on socioeconomic inequities and their intersections with age and ethnic identification.

Of the 2612 Aucklanders who completed the survey in 2022, around four in 10 (44.9%) said they had enough or more than enough money to meet their everyday needs, and 36.3 per cent said they had just enough money. Around one in five (18.8%) said they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs. There was a relatively even distribution of respondents living across different areas of relative socioeconomic deprivation across Auckland.

In addition to using results from the 2022 survey, data from previous Quality of Life surveys (2012 to 2020) were analysed, where possible, to understand how perceptions on social cohesion indicators (relating to belonging, participation, recognition, legitimacy) have changed over time, based on socioeconomic circumstances.

Key findings

Analysis of sample characteristics showed the interrelation of socioeconomic circumstances, age, and ethnicity. Pacific respondents were younger on average compared to those of other ethnic groups, and young people were more likely to report poorer socioeconomic outcomes. Māori and Pacific participants were more likely to report poorer socioeconomic circumstances compared to other ethnic groups, and Pacific respondents especially were more likely to live in areas of highest deprivation and to report they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs. Pacific respondents consistently reported the worst socioeconomic outcomes over the last decade of the survey, while European respondents reported the highest levels of income adequacy.

Findings showed that Aucklanders overall reported a high level of belonging and participation within their local communities, but socioeconomic factors posed barriers in community connection and social participation. The results consistently showed that those living in areas of higher socioeconomic disadvantage and low income adequacy faced challenges in participating in their communities and highlighted the intersections between financial and social exclusion. Although not all social participation is dependent on income, in many cases higher income adequacy facilitates certain types of social participation (through having more disposable income). More importantly, inequities in belonging and participation have worsened between socioeconomic groups over the last decade, pointing to deepening inequality in society.

Like belonging and participation, feelings of recognition in society were associated with socioeconomic circumstances. Respondents reporting low income adequacy were less likely to feel culturally included in society as well as positive about the impacts of increasing diversity in their local area, which signals feelings of rejection and marginalisation from society. Reflecting this, they were more likely to report problems with racism, discrimination, and other forms of prejudice, pointing to tensions around societal rejection. This intersects with notions of conflict theory, which provides an important lens for understanding how those who feel most disadvantaged in society can perceive threat to their finite resources from newcomers to that society.

The Quality of Life data show growing concerns among Auckland respondents surrounding legitimacy, trust, and safety, with key measures showing deterioration for all groups since 2020. However, the respondents who are the most affected by these issues again tended to experience poorer socioeconomic outcomes: Pacific respondents, those who live in the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of Auckland, and those who said they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs.

There is also concerning evidence surrounding institutional trust, with perceptions of local government decision-making likewise declining over the last decade of the survey and reaching a new

low in 2022. The largest erosions in institutional trust are observed in those respondents who traditionally have experienced the highest levels of trust and confidence in authorities: those with high income adequacy and European respondents (groups which overlap a considerable degree). On the other hand, respondents who did not have enough money, as well as Māori respondents, have consistently reported negative perceptions of local government decision-making over time.

Implications

This report demonstrates clear differences in self-reported belonging, participation, and societal inclusion among Auckland respondents, using evidence from the Quality of Life survey, and in so doing, highlights the role of socioeconomic inequities in inclusion and social cohesion. Aucklanders who are already thriving and doing well continue to do so, for the most part. However, some communities and groups are already struggling, and due to current pressures and challenges (such as the cost of living), may be falling further behind, and who feel increasingly excluded in social and economic life.

This has clear implications for Auckland Council and its intentions (through the Auckland Plan 2050 and Ngā Hapori Momoho/Thriving Communities strategy) to foster belonging and participation among all Aucklanders, regardless of their background, and to foster thriving and sustainable communities. The key actions available to council include supporting communities to thrive through targeted investment, to help reduce ongoing socioeconomic inequities.

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1 Introduction

For the last two decades, researchers and policymakers in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas have become increasingly concerned with questions surrounding the sustainability of modern societies across the globe, often referred to as 'social cohesion'. Broadly speaking, social cohesion refers to the 'glue' of society, which keeps individuals, communities, and institutions together rather than divided, with high levels of shared values and beliefs, and low levels of interpersonal and institutional conflict (Dempsey, 2008; Fookes, 2022; Witten et al., 2003). A socially cohesive society is often viewed as an aspirational state to achieve but requires ongoing investment and effort to build and maintain (Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019, 2020). Although it is fundamentally important to ensure we have thriving communities, social cohesion is not always a focus of policymakers and legislators. Instead, there are tendencies for social cohesion to become a prominent topic only when societal pressures and tensions are heightened (Jenson, 1998).

Sustaining a high level of social cohesion is particularly important in the current global and domestic context. The world is undergoing a period of rapid and accelerating change, with potentially destabilising consequences for the connections binding communities together (Gluckman et al., 2021, 2023; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). These changes are driven by a range of factors, including globalisation, migration, climate change and the growing intensity of natural disasters, changes in political power dynamics, and the onward march of rapidly emerging technologies that are changing the ways in which we live, communicate, and work (Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Gluckman et al., 2021, 2023; González-Bailón & Lelkes, 2022; Jenson, 1998; Meares & Gilbertson, 2013; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). Fostering social cohesion in this context is vital to facilitating a unified approach to the challenges we face.

There are many benefits associated with social cohesion for individuals and communities. Social cohesion often refers to benefits on the neighbourhood/community level, as well as the broader societal level. For instance, socially cohesive neighbourhoods are related to lower rates of conflict, crime, and violence within the neighbourhood, and less fear of crime and greater feelings of safety in one's neighbourhood. This is often associated with stronger interpersonal connections in one's local area and inclusion in the social life of the neighbourhood. At a higher level, this is related to broader health and social outcomes, such as better access to healthcare and better individual and community-level health outcomes, higher levels of productivity and participation in democracy, inclusion in economic and civic life, greater resilience to climate-related disasters and hazards, greater life satisfaction and quality of life, and long-term societal prosperity and sustainability (Acket et al., 2011; Beauvais, 2002; Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Borkowska & Laurence, 2021; Delhey & Dragolov, 2016; Fookes, 2022; Gluckman et al., 2021; Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019, 2020; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017; US Department of Health and Human Services, 2022).

Without high levels of social cohesion, we can expect to experience greater feelings of alienation, disconnection, and conflict with others in our neighbourhood (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2022). Low social cohesion can incur higher costs for society as a whole, through greater costs of policing, crime prevention, investment in communicating and eliciting cooperation, as well as lower individual attachment and investment in one's community, which can also have detrimental impacts on productivity, voluntary contributions, and engagement in civic life (Foa, 2011).

From this point of view, Auckland Council is committed to enhancing social cohesion in Auckland, as there are wide-ranging and profound long-term benefits that can be experienced by all Aucklanders. These efforts will help strengthen the ties needed to enhance societal resilience to current and future challenges, enable all Aucklanders to participate in society and democracy, and improve Auckland as an attractive place to live for current residents and future migrants.

1.1 Auckland Council's commitment to fostering social cohesion

Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland Council recognises the many challenges that we face, particularly the rapid population growth and social change characterising Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland's landscape. The city has a diverse population in which its individuals and communities bring together a range of worldviews, lifestyles, and expectations about our social, economic, environmental, and civic values. With such an assortment of communities represented in Auckland, there are also challenges in fostering acceptance, belonging, and inclusion for all people living across the city (Auckland Council, 2018).

The Auckland Plan 2050 recognises these challenges and outlines Auckland Council's overarching commitment to enhancing belonging and participation for all Aucklanders, through directives to 'foster an inclusive Auckland where everyone belongs' and to 'improve health and wellbeing for all Aucklanders by reducing harm and disparities in opportunities' (Auckland Council, 2018, p.45). This directive is further expanded and built on in Ngā Hapori Momoho/Thriving Communities strategy, which aims to create 'a fairer, more sustainable Tāmaki Makaurau where every Aucklander feels like they belong' (Auckland Council, 2022, p.2). The Thriving Communities strategy recognises the wellbeing challenges facing Aucklanders (particularly social, community, and economic difficulties) and sets out direction for the council group to deliver on key outcomes for communities:

- Manaakitanga: the essentials of a good life, with the ability to fulfil their potential
- Whanaungatanga: connectedness to other people and a feeling of belonging
- Kotahitanga: participation in our community, while taking action to meet common goals
- Kaitiakitanga: connectedness to the natural environment.

These outcomes aim to build and maintain a strong, sustainable, and socially cohesive Auckland, through enabling belonging, participation, and social inclusion among all Aucklanders. Building an ongoing body of evidence is fundamental to tracking Auckland's progress towards these outcomes and understanding the context of social cohesion across the city.

1.2 This report

This report aims to contribute to understanding the current picture of social cohesion in Auckland, using Quality of Life survey data, primarily using a socioeconomic lens. The literature outlines that socioeconomic circumstances are a key driver of social cohesion. Relative socioeconomic disadvantage can lead to both economic and social exclusion, impacting perceptions of social cohesion (see section 2). Therefore, this analysis explores what the Quality of Life survey can tell us about social cohesion, focussing on socioeconomic inequalities (as indicated by respondents by self-reported income adequacy and the NZDep index) and their intersection with ethnic identification as key drivers for understanding social cohesion, in line with the literature. The overlapping nature of socioeconomic circumstances, ethnic identification, and age are explored in section 4, but socioeconomic inequities are the focus here in contextualising social cohesion.

Social cohesion in this report follows the definition put forth by Gluckman et al. (2021), as it encompasses the various components that make up social cohesion and puts emphasis on the relationships between individuals in communities as well as the relationships between governing institutions and its citizens. According to this definition, social cohesion entails:

- Sufficient levels of trust and respect between those who are governed and the institutions and individuals who they empower to govern them;
- Sufficient trust and respect between all the components of a society (which by inference reflects a diverse set of identities, worldviews, values, beliefs, and interests) to foster cooperation for the good of society as a whole;
- Institutions and structures that promote trust and respect for and between all members of society; and allowing;
- Belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition, and legitimacy to be universally possible.

There is a unique opportunity to explore social cohesion in Auckland using evidence from Rangahau te Korou o te Ora/The Quality of Life Project, which is a longstanding local government research project that aims to understand the wellbeing of urban residents across Aotearoa New Zealand. Although not designed to measure social cohesion, the survey gathers important information about perceptions at the individual and neighbourhood levels that allow us to understand Auckland-specific evidence about social cohesion, including trends over the last decade.

The following sections (sections 2 and 3) provide further background reading on social cohesion literature, The Quality of Life Project, and the methods used to undertake analysis. Section 4 onwards explores the key findings from analysis and provides an overall discussion of what this means for Auckland. Findings are structured in line with four domains of social cohesion (belonging, participation, recognition, and legitimacy), with the view that all four dimensions contribute to understanding the final dimension of inclusion and, therefore, social cohesion.

2 Literature review on social cohesion

Social cohesion is an elusive concept to pin down and researchers have spent decades attempting to develop a common definition. Generally, the concept of social cohesion may be taken to refer to the level of connectedness and solidarity across different groups in society (Breedvelt et al., 2022; Fookes, 2022) and is thought to be an essential characteristic of a thriving society (Albarosa & Elsner, 2022; Jenson, 1998). Table 1 summarises the main elements that are thought to make up the concept of social cohesion (Forrest & Kearns, 2001).

Table 1. The domains of social cohesion

Domain	Description
Common values and a civic culture	Common aims and objectives; common moral principles and codes of behaviour; support for political institutions and participation in politics
Social order and social control	Absence of general conflict and threats to the existing order; absence of incivility; effective informal social control; tolerance; respect for difference; intergroup cooperation
Social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities	Harmonious economic and social development and common standards; redistribution of public finances and of opportunities; equal access to services and welfare benefits; ready acknowledgement of social obligations and willingness to assist others
Social networks and social capital	High degree of social interaction within communities and families; civic engagement and associational activity; easy resolution of collective action problems
Place attachment and identity	Strong attachment to place; intertwining of personal and place identity

Reproduced from Forrest & Kearns (2001).

There is no consensus on a single unifying definition of social cohesion (Albarosa & Elsner, 2022; Beauvais, 2002; Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Bottoni, 2018; Bruhn, 2009; Chan et al., 2006; Chuang et al., 2013; Clarke et al., 2023; Delhey & Dragolov, 2016; Fonseca et al., 2019; Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Gluckman et al., 2021; Janmaat, 2011; Jeannotte, 2000, 2003; Jenson, 1998; Klein, 2013). The main difficulty in establishing a clear and consistent definition is because social cohesion is a multidimensional concept. There is not just one composite factor or index that can be used to understand and measure it (Albarosa & Elsner, 2022; Bottoni, 2018; Bruhn, 2009; Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2015; Dickes & Valentova, 2013; Jenson, 1998; Laurence, 2011; Meer & Tolsma, 2014; Rajulton et al., 2007; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017; Wilkinson, 2007). Instead, social cohesion encompasses several distinct (but interrelated) sub-dimensions that interact in complex ways (Dickes & Valentova, 2013).

There is a wealth of literature exploring different definitions of social cohesion, which the reader may refer to, as it is beyond the scope of this report to exhaustively review every definition that has been put forth. Instead, we focus on one of the most well-regarded definitions of social cohesion that has persisted in the literature, posed by Jenson (1998), who at a high level suggests that there are certain

attributes that characterise a sustainable and well-functioning society. Social cohesion can be mapped across the following five dimensions, which are mutually interactive (Jenson, 1998; Spoonley et al., 2005):

- Belonging/isolation: the degree to which individuals feel a sense of being part of their broader community.
- Inclusion/exclusion: the degree to which individuals experience equity of opportunity and outcomes, specifically in relation to housing, health outcomes, education, income, and labour market participation.
- Participation/non-involvement: the degree to which individuals are involved in social activities, networks, and groups, as well as in political and civic life.
- Recognition/rejection: the degree to which individuals feel valued and respected by others, and the degree to which diversity is valued as a society. This also includes feeling a sense of safety, as well as feeling protected from prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and intolerance.
- Legitimacy/illegitimacy: the degree to which people are confident that public institutions protect the rights of individuals, enable trust in authority, resolve conflicts, and are responsive to people and communities.

This framework has been further expanded by other scholars, such as Bernard (1999), who added a sixth dimension of equality/inequality. In New Zealand, several papers by Paul Spoonley, Robin Peace and colleagues (Peace et al., 2005; Peace & Spoonley, 2019; Spoonley et al., 2005; Spoonley & Peace, 2007) draw on Jenson's framework and distinguish between *elements of socially cohesive behaviour* (belonging and participation) and *conditions for a socially cohesive society* (inclusion, recognition, and legitimacy).

2.1 Horizontal and vertical determinants

While this high-level framework is insightful in understanding the characteristics that define social cohesion, there is a need to investigate the factors that may strengthen or erode each of these five characteristics (Chan et al., 2006; Gluckman et al., 2021). Chan et al. (2006) developed a definition that incorporated understanding how *vertical* and *horizontal* interactions determine social cohesion. Horizontal interactions refer to interactions between members of a society, while vertical interactions refer to those between the state and its citizens. Gluckman et al. (2021) emphasise the importance of integrating vertical and horizontal interactions between parts of society, as it provides a deeper understanding of societal dynamics underpinning cohesion. An important distinction was made between individuals' trust in government, authorities, and institutions (vertical trust) and respect and trust between individuals in communities (horizontal trust). It is possible for a society to be high in horizontal trust but low in vertical trust, or vice versa, as well as being either high or low on both types of trust. Each permutation implies a different dynamic of social cohesion that is important to consider.

There are multiple and intersecting components of society to consider when assessing social cohesion (Fonseca et al., 2019; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). Fonseca et al. (2019) state that there are three levels: the level of the individual, the level of the community, and the level of institutions.

Most research explores social cohesion on the individual and community levels. It is rare to find empirical evidence investigating the role of governing institutions and other authorities. However, in ways similar to those described by other researchers, all three are necessary to fully understand the cohesion of a society (Chan et al., 2006; Gluckman et al., 2021). Cohesion may rate highly on the individual or community levels, but low when it comes to the level of institutions. This context may limit social inclusion and cohesion of individuals and communities as they may be restricted in their ability to fully participate in economic, political, and civic spaces in society.

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Social Development has developed a social cohesion strategic framework that considers these three levels, Te Korowai Whetū. The framework adopts a high-level vision, in which 'all people, whānau, and communities thrive, belong and are respected in Aotearoa New Zealand' (Ministry of Social Development, 2022; Te Korowai Whetū, 2022b). Te Tiriti o Waitangi provides a foundation for this social cohesion framework, as it sets out the partnership between tangata whenua and the Crown. Within this framework, Māori (as tangata whenua – the indigenous peoples) are guaranteed equal rights as citizens and tauiwi (non-Māori, immigrants) are welcome and belong to Aotearoa as tangata tiriti (people of the Treaty) (Te Korowai Whetū, 2022b). The framework outlines how social cohesion will be fostered for people, whānau and communities in the places that they live, work, play and learn, as well as when interacting with the institutions, systems, and sectors in society, through six focus areas:

1) Tackling all forms (racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.) and types of discrimination (unconscious, institutional, blatant, etc.)
2) Encouraging and facilitating positive interactions within and across diverse groups
3) Supporting and facilitating participation (in institutions)
4) Ensuring equitable access to the determinants of wellbeing for all
5) Fostering inclusive social values that unite us and value diverse contributions (building inclusive identities at the national and local level while also valuing and respecting differences)
6) Protecting our society and environment for future generations.

For the purpose of this research, we adopt the definition of social cohesion put forth by Gluckman et al. (2021, p.2), as it encompasses the considerations discussed above. According to this definition, social cohesion entails:

- Sufficient levels of trust and respect between those who are governed and the institutions and individuals who they empower to govern them;
- Sufficient trust and respect between all the components of a society (which by inference reflects a diverse set of identities, worldviews, values, beliefs, and interests) to foster cooperation for the good of society as a whole;
- Institutions and structures that promote trust and respect for and between all members of society; and allowing;
- Belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition, and legitimacy to be universally possible.

2.2 Key drivers of social cohesion

There is a significant body of literature examining the factors that help foster or erode social cohesion, and it is important to note that many of the key drivers overlap with each other.

2.2.1 Socioeconomic circumstances

Socioeconomic circumstances are a powerful factor in understanding the cohesion of a neighbourhood, community, or larger population. They are often intertwined with ethnicity; neighbourhoods that are ethnically diverse or which have large proportions of ethnically diverse residents are also often those that experience high levels of material deprivation (Bécares et al., 2011; Sturgis et al., 2014). This is a consistent finding in Aotearoa New Zealand, with Māori and Pacific peoples more likely to reside in areas of relatively higher material deprivation compared to European peoples (Loring et al., 2022; Maré et al., 2001). Therefore, where some research has found that ethnic diversity was negatively associated with social cohesion, more recent evidence shows that socioeconomic disadvantage has stronger negative effects on social cohesion (Bécares et al., 2011).

Socioeconomic disadvantage is typically associated with feelings of powerlessness, disenfranchisement, and alienation, which at a neighbourhood level can influence the degree of neighbourhood attachment, sense of belonging, and participation, as well as trust towards each other and other segments of society that are viewed as having more socioeconomic privilege. Inclusion in everyday life can also be limited, as higher deprivation often goes hand in hand with poorer access to employment, education, housing, and public services (Bécares et al., 2011). This creates differences between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Some research demonstrates that societies that tolerate large differences between the wealthiest and the poorest parts of society tend to have lower levels of social cohesion, in the forms of reduced trust and lower civic and political participation (Blakely et al., 2001; Kawachi et al., 1997; Stafford et al., 2003).

2.2.2 Ethnic diversity and immigration

Ethnic diversity and immigration are strongly linked, as immigration flows increase the ethnic heterogeneity of a population. It has been widely touted that ethnic diversity and immigration are negatively correlated with social cohesion. Putnam (2007) is commonly cited as the key proponent of this argument. Using evidence drawn from the United States, Putnam argued that ethnic diversity in neighbourhoods was associated with lower levels of solidarity and trust, rarer instances of mutual help and cooperation, and fewer friendships. In essence, people living in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods tend to 'hunker down' and isolate from others (Gijsberts et al., 2012; Hewstone, 2015; Meares & Gilbertson, 2013; Meer & Tolsma, 2014; Putnam, 2007).

Conflict theory is thought to be the key driver behind ethnic diversity eroding social cohesion, as it suggests that individuals identify with members of their own ethnic group (the ingroup), and members of other ethnic groups are viewed as the outgroup. Encounters between the ingroup and outgroup are characterised by competition for resources, leading to intergroup hostility, greater

threat, reduced trust and less social cohesion (Albarosa & Elsner, 2022; Gijsberts et al., 2012; Meer & Tolsma, 2014; Putnam, 2007; Sturgis et al., 2014).

However, there is little in the way of empirical evidence substantiating the claim that ethnic diversity in a population erodes social cohesion. What evidence there is to support this theory mainly comes from the United States, and from its specific race relations context (Afful et al., 2015; Moran, 2004). Evidence from other Western nations, such as the United Kingdom and Canada, typically highlight the intersectionality between ethnic identification and sociodemographic characteristics. For instance, several studies have found that, once controlling for other sociodemographic variables, the association between ethnic diversity in a population and social cohesion either vanishes or reverses – meaning that ethnic diversity has either no effect or *positive* effects on social cohesion (Bécares et al., 2011; Letki, 2008; Sturgis et al., 2014). In many of these studies, the actual association with social cohesion lies in socioeconomic factors.

2.2.3 Safety and crime

Several studies have explored the impact of feelings of safety and perceptions of crime on social cohesion. Feeling a sense of safety and security – whether that is physical or emotional safety and security – is essential to enhancing inclusion in society and enabling a high level of social cohesion (Bertotti et al., 2012; Dempsey, 2008; Gluckman et al., 2021, 2023; Meares & Gilbertson, 2013). This links directly with socioeconomic factors, as socioeconomic disadvantage is often associated with higher rates of crime and lower perceptions of safety (De Courson & Nettle, 2021; Kamphuis et al., 2010; Messner et al., 2013). Crime is a major barrier in developing strong communities, whether that relates to the fear of crime or actual incidences of crime. Even when the fear of crime among communities is higher than the actual rate of crime, this results in lower perceptions of safety and, therefore, lower perceptions of social cohesion (Acket et al., 2011; Bertotti et al., 2012; Clarke et al., 2023; Dempsey, 2008).

2.2.4 Institutional barriers

A range of structural factors affect residents' sense of participation, belonging, and inclusion in society, and can hinder the conditions needed to enhance social cohesion. Institutional and structural factors may prevent individuals from fully participating in the social and economic life of their local area or country. There are many ways in which people can be excluded from education, job opportunities, housing, and health and social services, such as through language barriers, experiencing racism and discrimination, having accessibility needs that are not catered for, inadequate transportation systems that prevent people from reaching opportunities and services, and so on (Clarke et al., 2023; Malatest International, 2021; Parekh et al., 2018; Spoonley et al., 2005).

2.2.5 Media representation

Media channels are key vehicles for disseminating information about different groups in society, and the ways in which minority groups are represented can enable or disrupt social cohesion. In particular when specific ethnic communities are framed in negative ways, this can result in negative discourse about their place in society, and incite prejudice and discrimination towards them, as well as reduced trust (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2015). This can result in lower levels of belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition, and legitimacy experienced by these groups (Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2015). Alternatively, media can promote social cohesion. Community media, for example, can help migrant communities maintain connections to their own culture and language while also assisting them to integrate in their new home country (Lewis, 2008).

Social media has had transformative impacts on communication, access to information, and public discourse. While it has enabled better access to information and social connectivity overall, it has enabled public discourse to become more polarised, as it normalises engaging in vindictive and vehement discourse for which there are little to no consequences in an online setting (Gluckman et al., 2023; González-Bailón & Lelkes, 2022; Malatest International, 2021). The nature of social media also enables the rapid dissemination of misinformation and disinformation, which can impact social bonds and trust in institutions, such as the government, mainstream media outlets, scientists, societal institutions, and other structures viewed as elitist by those who may already feel disenfranchised from everyday society. This, in turn, can result in weakening social cohesion overall (González-Bailón & Lelkes, 2022).

Emerging artificial intelligence technologies (such as Chat-GPT) have, in recent months, further exacerbated these issues in several ways. Firstly, it has impacts for economic inclusion in society as there is large potential for artificial intelligence to automate labour, which may result in widespread job losses and facilitate poorer outcomes and marginalisation of some groups in society. Secondly, artificial intelligence can also enable content to be manipulated and modified in misleading ways, which has impacts on the spread of mis/dis/malinformation among communities (Gluckman et al., 2023).

2.3 Measuring social cohesion

Due to the challenges in defining social cohesion, there are inconsistencies in how it is measured. It is common for generalised trust to be used as a proxy measure for social cohesion (Albarosa & Elsner, 2022; Fookes, 2022; Gijsberts et al., 2012; Stafford et al., 2003), usually in the form of a survey question such as ‘In general, how much do you trust people in [area]?’ However, as noted above, it is generally accepted that social cohesion is a multidimensional concept and thus challenging to measure (Albarosa & Elsner, 2022; Bottoni, 2018; Dandy & Pe-Pua, 2015; Dickes & Valentova, 2013; Martínez-Martínez et al., 2018). Generalised trust only captures one element comprising the overall concept.

Many attempts have been made to measure social cohesion, largely at a neighbourhood level. For instance, the Neighborhood Social Cohesion questionnaire (Stafford et al., 2003) aims to measure

structural (family and friendship ties, participation in organised activities, integration into wider society) and cognitive (trust, attachment to neighbourhood, tolerance and respect, and practical help) aspects of social cohesion. This scale has been adapted by others (Dupuis et al., 2014, 2017). Other measurement tools include Buckner's (1988) and Sampson et al.'s (1997) neighbourhood cohesion scales. Oberndorfer et al. (2022) conducted a meta-analysis of social cohesion measurement tools and found that, across the 78 measurement tools included in the review, there was moderate but consistent evidence that social cohesion is contextual in nature.

The varying use of different scales presents challenges in comparability of data available worldwide. Other approaches to measuring social cohesion include those currently taken in Aotearoa New Zealand, such as reporting on a wide range of social cohesion indicators comprising Jenson's (1998) dimensions of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition, and legitimacy. For instance, the 2022 baseline report on social cohesion (Te Korowai Whetū, 2022a) collates available New Zealand data on these dimensions from a variety of sources, such as the General Social Survey, the New Zealand Health Survey, Te Kupenga, the Household Labour Force Survey, and voter turnout data. Some indicators are also drawn from the Quality of Life survey.

3 Social cohesion in Aotearoa

Aotearoa New Zealand is generally considered to be a nation with high levels of social cohesion (Fookes, 2022; Gluckman et al., 2021; Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019, 2020; Spoonley et al., 2020). However, the issue of social cohesion was recently forced to the forefront of public discourse in New Zealand. This was initially driven by the terrorist attacks on two Christchurch mosques on 15 March 2019. A Royal Commission of Inquiry was established in response to these attacks, primarily to investigate what public sector agencies knew of the attacks before they happened and what could be done to prevent such attacks in the future. In doing so, the Inquiry also explored social cohesion in New Zealand more broadly, as a way to build inclusion for all members of society and prevent incidences of terrorism in the future. As a result of this, the Ministry of Social Development was selected as the lead government agency to undertake a social cohesion work programme – including a framework for understanding and measuring social cohesion – with collaborative efforts from all parts of the public sector.

The last few years have been further markedly eventful for New Zealand's sense of social cohesion. The COVID-19 pandemic introduced sweeping disturbances to everyday life, due to associated lockdowns and restrictions on daily living, particularly our ability to maintain meaningful social relationships with whānau, friends, and the communities to which we belong. Although the national COVID-19 response was initially characterised by cohesion and trust ('the team of five million'), anti-government sentiment and feelings of alienation and distrust soon emerged among some segments of society (OECD, 2023). Anti-lockdown and anti-vaccination protests fuelled by misinformation and distrust of authority were prevalent throughout 2021 and 2022, presenting further ruptures in interpersonal trust as well as trust towards the government, the media, and scientists. Amidst all this, economic pressures in the form of housing unaffordability and a cost-of-living crisis have increasingly affected the day-to-day lives of New Zealanders and deepened disparities in wellbeing.

These events have cultivated widespread discourse about inequities experienced between multiple segments of society and may contribute to residents' experiences of whether they feel a sense of belonging, opportunity, and inclusion in New Zealand society. For instance, some commentators in the media have claimed that New Zealand has become a more socially divided society (Edwards, 2022; Gabel & Knox, 2022). There have also been numerous observations about declining trust in the government and other authorities due to widespread misinformation, as seen in the discourse surrounding the 2023 New Zealand Census (NZ Herald, 2023; Strong, 2023; Williams, 2023). This has implications for whether we have a socially cohesive society in which individuals, communities, and institutions can work together to achieve common goals for the collective, and which is well placed to respond and adapt to the many and varied challenges before us.

3.1 What does the evidence tell us about social cohesion in Aotearoa?

Despite emerging issues around social cohesion, existing evidence suggests that New Zealand has high levels of connectedness and belonging, trust in others, participation, and wellbeing. However, there are disparities in experiences between different groups – specifically for Māori and Pacific peoples – in society (OECD, 2023; Te Korowai Whetū, 2022a). Te Korowai Whetū (2022) collated available New Zealand data on social cohesion from various sources, the findings of which are summarised here.

Overall wellbeing: New Zealanders have a high level of wellbeing, as indicated by self-reported life satisfaction, mental wellbeing, family wellbeing, and income adequacy, but there are persistent inequities reported by some groups, such as Māori people, disabled communities, and Rainbow communities.

Belonging and social connection: Over time, data shows that levels of loneliness among New Zealanders has been increasing and the amount of face-to-face contact that people have had with family and friends has been decreasing – even before the pandemic.

Economic participation and inclusion: Participation in education and the labour market were negatively impacted during the pandemic, especially for young people aged 18 to 24 years old.

Civic participation and inclusion: Engaging in democracy has been steadily declining over time, as evidenced by ongoing low voter turnout in both central and local government elections.

Societal trust: While there are high levels of interpersonal (horizontal) and institutional (vertical) trust in society, some groups experienced less trust in others – such as Māori and Pacific peoples, and disabled people. Critically, measures of trust in institutions have trended upwards between 2007 and 2020 (an exception among other OECD countries). However, it is worth noting that these data do not account for subsequent events from 2020 onwards which may have affected institutional trust (such as anti-vaccination protests and cost-of-living pressures).

Feelings of safety: Feelings of safety in both physical and online spaces are becoming increasingly profound, especially for women, disabled people, and young people.

Acceptance of diversity: Although there are high levels of acceptance and valuing of diversity towards migrants in New Zealand, the level of acceptance is contingent on migrants' country of origin. Experiences of discrimination continue to be a major problem for some groups and are a key barrier to social cohesion.

Attitudes towards migrants and diversity in New Zealand (MBIE Community Survey)

A long-standing survey (since 2009) commissioned by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment has aimed to understand community perceptions of migrants and immigration in New Zealand (Kantar Public, 2021). The survey methods have changed over time, but efforts have consistently been made to survey a representative sample of New Zealand's population, based on characteristics like age, gender, ethnic group, region, and household income. In 2021, 3000 New Zealanders were surveyed for this research.

Overall, the 2021 survey noted overall positive attitudes towards migrants, and over half of respondents felt that the increasing number of migrants made their communities a better place to live. Respondents also reported feeling that migration has a generally positive impact on New Zealand's economy and culture. However, since the inception of the survey, respondents have consistently reported differences in their perceptions of migrants from different parts of the world. For instance, respondents are most positive about migrants from the United Kingdom and Australia but have consistently been the least positive about migrants from China and India, as well as refugees.

Trust in institutions is an important gap in existing literature. The New Zealand General Social Survey measures this by asking respondents how much they trust various institutions in New Zealand, including the police, the courts, the education system, the health system, the media, and Parliament. Findings across the 2014 to 2021 General Social Survey showed that trust in various institutions hardly changed across this time, although there was a small decline in trust in the health system. The media has consistently rated as the least trusted institution by respondents, while the police have been the most trusted (Stats NZ, 2019, 2022). Another study that aimed to address understandings of institutional trust in New Zealand was the OECD Trust Survey, which explored drivers of trust in democratic institutions in order to understand the ways in which governments can strengthen trust among its citizens (OECD, 2023).

Trust in New Zealand institutions (OECD Trust Survey)

The 2021 OECD Trust Survey provides insights into trust in public institutions across 22 OECD countries (including Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan, Portugal, South Korea, and the United Kingdom). Around 2000 residents were surveyed in each country, including 2211 New Zealanders.

Overall, New Zealanders reported high levels of trust in their public institutions compared to other OECD nations. While other nations, such as Australia and the United States, have experienced declines in trust of the government, over the 15-year period of the survey (2006-2021), New Zealanders' trust in government remained high and even increased slightly over the time leading up to the pandemic. Data further reinforced increases in institutional trust over 2020 to 2021, particularly trust in the health system. However, tensions caused by economic pressures, the extended nature of mandates and restrictions, and the spread of misinformation may have weakened trust in public institutions over time.

Trust varied by the type of public institution. For instance, trust was highest in the police and the courts, but lowest in local government councillors. Key drivers of trust in the public service largely depended on perceptions of their responsiveness and preparedness to protect its citizens in a future pandemic. Meanwhile, important drivers of trust in local government councillors included being able to voice concerns on local issues and expectations that opinions voiced in public consultations would be considered.

There were also differences in trust based on group identity – for instance, Māori and Pacific peoples, women, younger people, and those of lower socioeconomic status all tended to report lower levels of trust in various public institutions.

While the overall picture on social cohesion appears to be positive, further understanding of how this might vary across the country is needed, particularly in Auckland, where the size and scale of population composition differs drastically to other parts of the nation.

3.2 Understanding social cohesion in Tāmaki Makaurau

Cities present an interesting challenge to social cohesion, as they are amalgamations of diverse communities. Enabling social cohesion within this context can be challenging as there can often be barriers to finding common ground and ensuring that all groups within this society experience equal opportunity and inclusion (Auckland Council, 2018).

Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland is a particularly unique context for exploring social cohesion. As Aotearoa New Zealand's largest city – consisting of approximately 1.7 million people – it is home to people of many different ethnic groups, cultures, countries of origin, religions, gender identities, ages, and other identities. For instance, according to the 2018 Census (Stats NZ, n.d.):

- Birthplace: Four in ten (41.6%) Aucklanders were born overseas. The top three regions of origin included Asia (19.1%) the Pacific Islands (7.8%), and the United Kingdom and Ireland (5.7%).
- Languages spoken: There are a wide variety of languages spoken in Auckland, aside from English, including Samoan (4.4% of speakers), Northern Chinese (4.4%), Māori (2.4%), Yue (2.3%), and another Sinitic language (not further defined) (2.3%). One-third (30.1%) of Aucklanders said they spoke more than one language.
- Ethnicity: Ethnic composition is more diverse in Auckland compared to New Zealand as a whole. For instance, half (53.5%) of Aucklanders reported they were of European ethnicity, compared to 70.2 per cent of all New Zealanders. One in 10 (11.5%) said they were Māori, and 15.5 per cent were Pacific. The Asian ethnic group is the fastest growing compared to others – 28.2 per cent of Aucklanders in 2018 said they were of an Asian ethnic group, compared to 18.9% in 2006.
- Religion: Four in 10 (42.6%) Aucklanders reported they had no religion. The most common religions were Christianity (38.4%), Hinduism (5.2%), Islam (2.6%), and Buddhism (1.9%).

Few New Zealand data sources enable a regional exploration of social cohesion indicators. Rangahau te Korou o te Ora/The Quality of Life survey data is one such source. According to 2022 data, at an

overall level, Auckland respondents reported high levels of social connectedness and participation. However, there were more mixed results in perceptions of inclusion in society (NielsenIQ, 2022a).

Other evidence suggests that Aucklanders have growing concerns about crime and their personal safety in public spaces, which has implications for social inclusion and cohesion. A recent Auckland Council study exploring the perceptions of Auckland city centre residents (NielsenIQ, 2023) indicated that negative perceptions of safety, crime, and antisocial behaviours were key issues for residents, which affected their experiences of living in the city centre. While a large proportion of respondents (72%) agreed that a feeling of community was important to them, only 20 per cent agreed there was a feeling of community in the city centre.

Te Korowai Whetū (2022b) underscores the importance of inclusive data and using research to identify need and gaps, and guide prioritisation and decision-making regarding social cohesion. The Quality of Life survey can provide a useful contribution. As noted above, the 2022 Auckland report found differences in social cohesion indicators based on ethnic group and local board area. However, the existing literature suggests the importance of understanding the impact of socioeconomic inequalities on social inclusion and cohesion. Although the Quality of Life survey was not specifically designed to measure social cohesion, it can offer many useful insights.

The next section provides a brief outline of the survey and research method, before discussing results.

4 Method

Rangahau te Korou o te Ora/The Quality of Life Project is a collaborative local government project. It was initiated 20 years ago in response to the need to understand the economic and social wellbeing of New Zealand residents and communities living in large urban areas. A survey is undertaken every two years, which is an important and rich source of information for participating councils. It collects information on residents' perceptions of their overall quality of life, housing, transport, the built and natural environment, health and wellbeing, crime and safety, local issues, community and social networks, culture and identity, climate change, economic wellbeing, and council processes.

The 2022 Quality of Life survey was a partnership between nine councils (representing large urban areas that account for 57% of New Zealand's total population):

- Auckland Council
- Christchurch City Council
- Dunedin City Council
- Greater Wellington Regional Council
- Hamilton City Council
- Hutt City Council
- Porirua City Council
- Tauranga City Council
- Wellington City Council.

The target population for the Quality of Life survey are residents aged 18 years and over who live in the participating council areas. In 2022, a total of 7518 New Zealanders completed the survey, of whom 2612 were Auckland residents.

4.1 Survey design

Respondents were sampled using the New Zealand Electoral Roll, which is the most robust database for the New Zealand population enabling representative sampling. It enabled sample selection using variables such as meshblock, Māori descent, and age.[1] During fieldwork, areas in which response rates were lagging were boosted by recontacting previous 2018 and 2020 participants (who had consented for this purpose) to invite them to complete the survey.

The 2022 survey was administered primarily online, although respondents could request a hard copy survey. The online method was used for respondents aged under 50 years (although they could request a hard copy questionnaire). The mixed online and paper method was implemented for those aged 50 years and over, with online completion encouraged in the first instance.

[1] However, the Electoral Roll may not be entirely representative of the population, as it only captures those who are eligible to vote. Therefore, certain groups are less likely to be included within this database, such as recent migrants, students, non-English speakers, people sleeping rough and those who are homeless.

Once the sample frame was drawn, potential respondents aged 18 and over were sent personalised letters through the mail explaining the survey and how to complete it. Reminder postcards were also sent to boost response rates and a prize draw was implemented to incentivise completion.

The sampling and fieldwork were undertaken by NielsenIQ, an independent research company. Fieldwork took place between 28 March and 13 June 2022. Results were weighted to be representative by age within gender, ethnic group, and local board. For the Auckland total, the results for each community area were post-weighted to their respective proportion of the Auckland population to ensure the results were representative.

More information on the survey method is available in the 2022 Quality of Life Technical Report (NielsenIQ, 2022b).

4.2 Research questions

This study explores the following research questions:

- What can the Quality of Life survey data tell us about social cohesion in Auckland, in relation to Aucklanders' perceptions of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition, and legitimacy?
- What differences, if any, exist in perceptions of social cohesion between groups based on socioeconomic circumstances and ethnic identification?
- To what extent have perceptions of social cohesion changed or stayed the same over time, across Aucklanders overall, and also at a sub-group level?

4.3 Analysis for this report

In line with the literature described in section 2, the analysis in this report focusses on examining differences in social cohesion primarily by socioeconomic circumstances. Age and ethnicity were also considerations in analysis, but the focus is on relative socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage, and how this might impact on Aucklanders' perceptions of social cohesion.

There are two variables in the Quality of Life datasets that have been used to measure socioeconomic circumstances. The first is the NZDep index (an area-based measure of relative socioeconomic disadvantage), and the second is respondents' self-reported income adequacy (a more subjective measure but which provides insights into respondents' day-to-day lived experiences of their socioeconomic circumstances).

- Deprivation quintile: The 2018 New Zealand Index of Deprivation (NZDep2018)[2] measures the level of socioeconomic deprivation for respondents on a scale of 1-10, where Decile 1 represents the least deprived areas and Decile 10 represents the most deprived areas. Decile was determined for Electoral Roll respondents only (as it is based on address). Pairs of deciles have been combined into five quintiles for analysis, with Quintile 1 representing the

[2] https://ehinz.ac.nz/indicators/population-vulnerability/socioeconomic-deprivation-profile/

least deprived areas (Deciles 1 and 2) and Quintile 5 representing the most deprived areas (Deciles 9 and 10).

- **Perceived income adequacy:** This was determined by responses to the survey question: "Which of the following best describes how well your total income (from all sources) meets your everyday needs for things such as accommodation, food, clothing, and other necessities?" Results are shown broken down by the answer options: "More than enough money", "Enough money", "Just enough money", and "Do not have enough money". This report uses the terms **high income adequacy** to refer to respondents who stated they have **more than enough money** to meet their everyday needs, while **low income adequacy** refers to those who stated they **did not have enough money** to meet their everyday needs.

Where notable, differences by ethnic group are also shown. Ethnic group was determined by participants' responses to the survey question: "Which ethnic group, or groups, do you belong to?", with respondents able to select multiple groups. Responses were categorised into four broad ethnic group classifications:

  - **Māori**
  - **European/Other:** comprising "New Zealand European" and write-in answers back-coded to "Other European" or "Other ethnicity".
  - **Pacific:** comprising "Samoan", "Cook Island Māori", "Tongan", "Niuean", and write-in answers back-coded to "Other Pacific".
  - **Asian/Indian:** comprising "Chinese", "Indian", "Filipino", "Korean", and write-in answers back-coded to "Other Asian".

    Responses were also analysed by specific ethnic group categories, where the sample size was at least 100 respondents. Findings for these groups (New Zealand European, Samoan, Chinese, and Indian) are included where noteworthy.

The analysis presented in this report mainly draws from the 2022 survey, but also includes results for two questions from the 2020 survey, which were not included in the 2022 survey wave (refer to Appendix A for the 2022 questionnaire). Where applicable, analysis of change over time has been conducted, for the period 2012 to 2022. In some instances, there have been slight wording changes to questions over the years (refer to Appendix B for details); however, results are still comparable.

The measures reported here were selected to provide insights into respondents' experiences of belonging, participation, recognition, and legitimacy, and taken together, provide information about their overall feelings of inclusion in society.

4.4 Presentation of results

Differences in results between the subgroup being compared and the rest of the sample are reported when they are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level.

Due to rounding, percentages shown in charts and tables may not always add to 100. In section 3 onwards, results are weighted but all base sizes shown in charts are unweighted base sizes. Percentages of less than five per cent are suppressed in charts to avoid visual clutter.

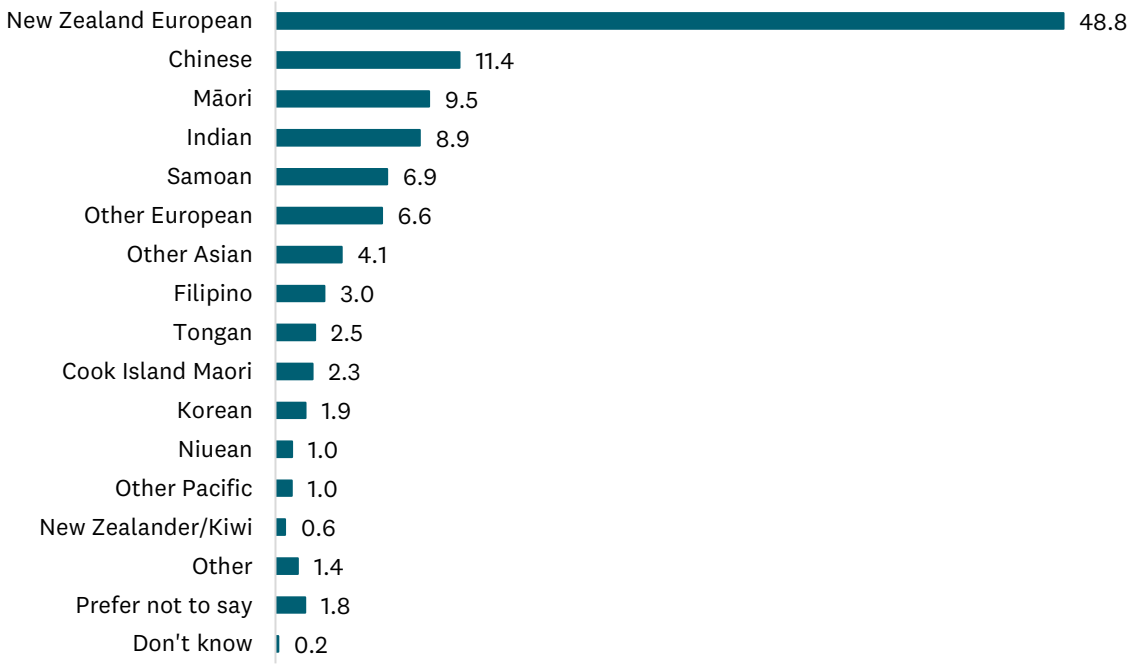
5 The 2022 Auckland sample

In 2022, 2612 Auckland residents completed the survey. The sample was broadly representative of the Auckland population (see Appendix C for details). As discussed below, there are several overlapping and connected demographic characteristics of the 2022 sample to bear in mind while interpreting the results.

5.1 Asian participants more likely to have been born overseas

In 2022, just over half (56.2%) of Auckland respondents identified as European/Other. Around three in 10 (29.5%) identified as Asian, and one in 10 identified as Pacific (13.0%) or Māori (9.8%). Figure 1 shows a detailed ethnic group breakdown of the sample.

Figure 1. Detailed ethnic group breakdown (n=2612) (%)



Note: A total count ethnicity approach is used in Quality of Life, meaning that respondents could select more than one ethnic group. As a result, the total proportion of respondents exceeds 100 per cent.

Over half (57.1%) of respondents were born in New Zealand and the remaining 42.3 per cent were born overseas. There were ethnic group differences in birthplace. Māori (97.4%) and European/Other (75.6%) respondents were more likely to have been born in New Zealand, whereas Asian respondents (78.8%) were more likely to have an overseas birthplace. Examining the overseas-born group more closely, there were no ethnic group differences in the length of time that respondents had lived in New Zealand.

Of those born overseas, the majority (80.6%) had lived in New Zealand for 10 years or more, 14.2 per cent had lived in New Zealand between five and just under 10 years, and the remaining 5.2 per cent

had lived here for less than five years. According to the 2018 Census, however, 59 per cent of Aucklanders who were born overseas had lived in New Zealand for 10 years or more.

It is likely that the over-representation of long-term overseas-born Auckland residents in the Quality of Life data is a product of Electoral Roll sampling, as individuals who are on the Electoral Roll are eligible voters only (and, therefore, must be New Zealand citizens or permanent residents).

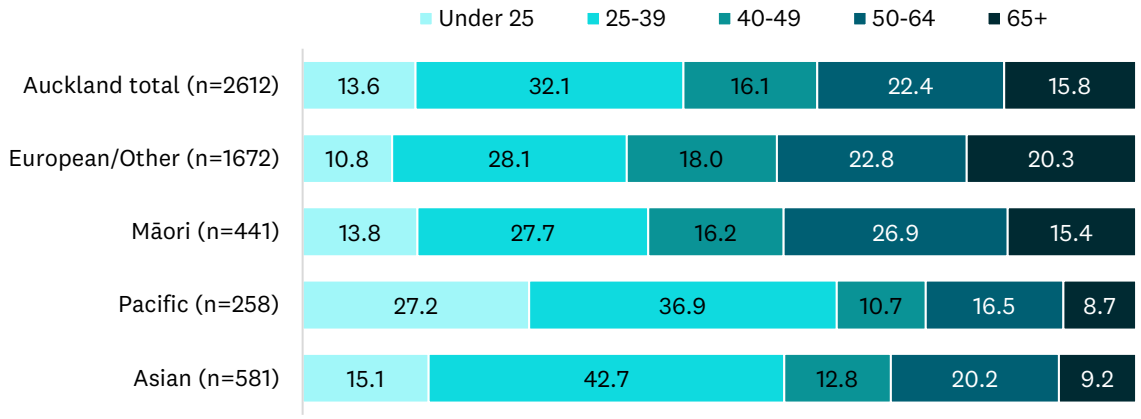
5.2 Pacific and Asian respondents were younger compared to others

The following sections show the interrelation of age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic circumstances in the Auckland sample.

In the overall population, Māori and Pacific populations have more youthful age structures than other ethnic groups (Stats NZ, 2020). However, this did not entirely bear out in the Quality of Life sample, possibly due to the use of the Electoral Roll as a sample frame (Figure 2).

In the 2022 survey, the Pacific and Asian groups had younger age structures compared to other ethnic groups, with around three in five aged under 40 years (64.1% of the Pacific sample and 57.1% of the Asian sample, compared with 45.7% of the whole sample), and only 25.2 per cent and 29.4 per cent respectively of each group aged 50 years and over. Māori and European/Other groups shared similar age structures (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Age distribution of respondents, by ethnic group (2022) (%)



The finding that the Māori sub-sample did not have a younger age structure was unexpected in the context of previous research. Further analysis was done of respondents who selected 'Māori' as their only ethnic group. Examination of the 'Māori only' group revealed that this group skewed even older, with fewer respondents aged 25-39 (15.5%, compared to 27.7% of all Māori respondents), and more respondents aged 50-64 (38.6%, compared to 26.9% of all Māori respondents). Again, this is likely a by-product of Electoral Roll sampling, as older respondents are more likely to be enrolled to vote (Greaves et al., 2020). There were no other substantial changes to ethnic sample age structure when examining 'Pacific only', 'Asian only', and 'European/Other only' sub-samples.

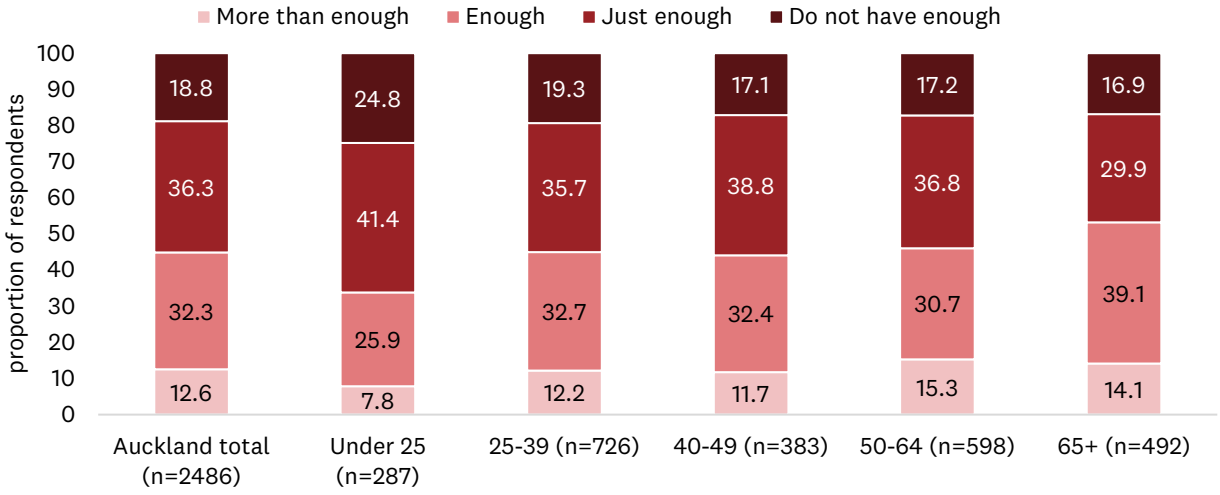
5.3 Young people more likely to report poorer socioeconomic outcomes

In 2022, there was a relatively even distribution of respondents living across socioeconomic deprivation quintiles (Appendix C). Younger people aged 18-24 years were slightly more likely to live in Quintile 5 areas (28.3% of young people, compared to 20.5% of the whole Auckland sample), but this was a small difference and still showed a wide spread of young people across different quintiles. This may be due to a large proportion (57.3%) of young respondents living in a home owned by family members.

Analysis of self-reported income adequacy by age may reflect a more accurate representation of respondents' everyday economic and financial realities. Overall, around one in five (18.8%) of Auckland respondents said they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs, while 44.9 per cent said they had either 'enough' or 'more than enough' to meet their needs. When examined further by age, those aged under 25 (24.8%) were more likely to report they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs, and significantly fewer of this group (33.8%) said they had either 'enough' or 'more than enough' to meet their everyday needs (Figure 3).

Reporting higher income adequacy improved with age, which likely reflects life stage and career opportunities. Younger respondents aged under 25 were more likely to report lower income adequacy compared to older respondents, while those aged 65+ were more likely than others to say they had enough or more than enough to meet their everyday needs (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Income adequacy by age band (2022) (%)



5.4 Ethnicity is also strongly linked to socioeconomic circumstances

In 2022, there was a strong overlap between respondents' ethnicity and their socioeconomic outcomes, as measured by the NZDep index and self-reported income adequacy. In particular, Māori and Pacific respondents were more likely to report poorer economic outcomes compared to other ethnic groups (Table 2). Both groups (especially Pacific respondents) were more likely to be living in NZDep index Quintile 5 areas and to report they did not have enough money to meet their everyday

needs compared to other ethnic groups. On the other hand, European/Other respondents were less likely to be living in Quintile 5 areas.

Table 2. Ethnicity, socioeconomic deprivation, and income adequacy (2022) (%)

DepIndex quintile	Auckland total (n=2202)	European/Other (n=1332)	Māori (n=377)	Pacific (n=238)	Asian (n=538)
Quintile 1	21.9	29.4	15.5	5.8	17.8
Quintile 2	20.9	25.6	9.6	5.9	21.6
Quintile 3	21.1	21.4	18.8	8.3	27.4
Quintile 4	15.6	13.7	18.5	14.9	19.1
Quintile 5	20.5	9.7	37.6	65.0	14.2
Income adequacy	Auckland total (n=2486)	European/Other (n=1618)	Māori (n=427)	Pacific (n=239)	Asian (n=545)
More than enough money	12.6	18.0	7.1	4.1	7.4
Enough money	32.3	37.4	29.5	19.6	29.5
Just enough money	36.3	30.1	39.0	39.3	43.4
Do not have enough money	18.8	14.4	24.4	37.0	19.6

Statistically significant differences are shown. Green shading marks a significantly higher difference than the rest of the sample, and orange shading marks a significantly lower difference than the rest of the sample.

Exploring the links between age and ethnicity, as well as age and socioeconomic status, show that there are some socioeconomic inequities by ethnic group that are not fully explained by age. For instance, as Figure 3 shows, poorer socioeconomic outcomes were more common among younger respondents while better outcomes were more common among older respondents, which may simply correlate to life stage. Māori respondents were also more likely to experience poorer socioeconomic outcomes, but this cannot be explained by age, as they shared a similar age structure to the European/Other sub-sample (Figure 2). In the same vein, the Pacific and Asian sub-samples shared similar age structures, but Pacific respondents experienced disproportionately poorer socioeconomic outcomes compared with Asians.

5.5 Lower socioeconomic outcomes for Pacific respondents over time

Table 3 shows the extent to which respondents' perceptions of income adequacy have changed over the last decade of the survey.[3] In short, the overall trend in income adequacy has improved slightly by 6.3 percentage points, and improvements were seen for respondents of all ethnic groups as well.

However, income adequacy did not change for those aged under 25 years between 2012 and 2022, and this group experienced the lowest levels of income adequacy compared to older

[3] The focus of timeseries analysis was on perceived income adequacy as they were collected throughout 2012 and 2022. DepIndex data was only collected from 2018 onwards.

respondents. This finding is expected, given that this group typically pursues further education and/or if they are working, their labour opportunities are usually lower-wage and lower-skilled.

Income adequacy improved the most for those aged 65 years and over, and by 2022, this group had the highest levels of income adequacy. While those aged 50-64 years also had higher levels of income adequacy compared to younger respondents, the proportions who said they had enough money to meet their everyday needs hardly changed over the last decade of the survey. For those aged 25-49 years old, income adequacy improved between 2012 and 2022 to levels comparable to those aged 50-64 years.

At all surveyed timepoints, European/Other respondents reported the highest levels of income adequacy, and Pacific respondents reported the lowest levels. Māori and Asian respondents reported similar levels of income adequacy to each other at most surveyed timepoints. In addition, there are notable disparities in perceptions of high income adequacy between European/Other respondents and respondents of other ethnic groups. For example, there has consistently been a gap of approximately 30 percentage points, between the proportions of European/Other and Pacific respondents who indicated over the years that they had enough or more than enough money to meet their everyday needs.

Table 3. Perceptions of 'high' income adequacy over time – by group (2012-2022) (%)

	2012 (n=2430)	2014 (n=2315)	2016 (n=2567)	2018 (n=2699)	2020 (n=2433)	2022 (n=2486)
Auckland total	38.6	38.9	39.1	42.8	47.2	44.9
Under 25	32.2	29.3	30.1	35.8	39.7	33.8
25-39 years	38.1	36.6	34.8	41.8	48.6	44.9
40-49 years	36.9	34.7	39.8	40.8	45.6	44.1
50-64 years	43.7	45.6	47.3	45.7	48.5	46.0
65+ years	41.4	47.8	41.9	50.3	50.7	53.2
European/Other	45.4	47.3	50.8	51.1	57.4	55.5
Māori	28.7	29.1	27.8	36.0	39.1	36.6
Pacific	15.4	16.6	21.1	21.8	22.2	23.7
Asian	28.0	25.5	30.4	28.9	42.4	37.0

Depicts proportions who said they had NET enough ('more than enough' and 'enough') money to meet their everyday needs.

6 Belonging and participation

Belonging and participation are key elements of social cohesion and involve the extent to which individuals feel a sense of being part of their broader community. Feelings of belonging and degree of participation usually occur at a local or community level. The Quality of Life survey can provide many insights into belonging and participation at this local level as the questions ask participants about these aspects of their behaviour in relation to their local area or neighbourhood.

Summary:

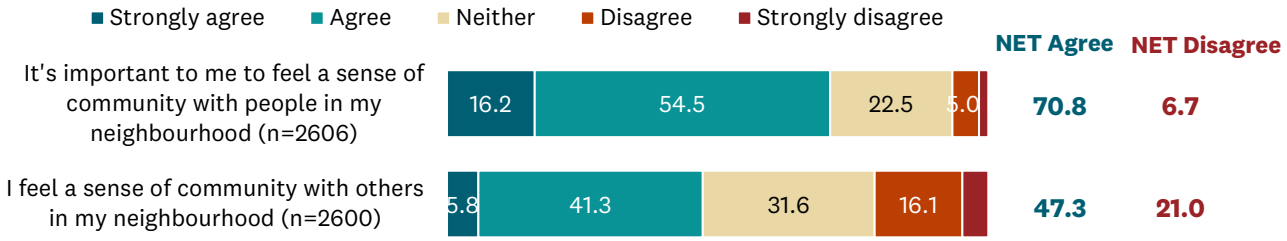
Findings showed that Aucklanders overall reported a high level of belonging and participation within their local communities, but socioeconomic factors posed barriers in community connection and social participation. The results consistently showed that those living in areas of higher socioeconomic disadvantage and who had low income adequacy faced challenges in participating in their communities and highlighted the intersections between financial and social exclusion. Although not all social participation is dependent on income, in many cases higher income adequacy facilitates certain types of social participation (through having more disposable income). More importantly, inequities in belonging and participation have worsened between socioeconomic groups over the last decade, pointing to deepening inequality in society.

The results also showed that some ethnic communities were more disadvantaged than others, partially attributed to their greater likelihood of experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage. Pacific communities consistently reported lower community wellbeing, as did some Asian communities, particularly Indian respondents. These findings are important in the context of the collectivist nature of these groups, which place a high level of importance in community connection, togetherness, and solidarity, and suggests there are specific community needs that may not be met for these groups.

6.1 Connection to local community

Since the 2012 survey, the Quality of Life survey has repeatedly found among respondents a disparity between the importance of feeling a sense of community in their neighbourhood and the actual experience of feeling a sense of community in their neighbourhood. Results from the 2022 survey were no different. In 2022, 70.8 per cent of Auckland respondents overall agreed that feeling a sense of community in their local area was important to them. Despite this, less than half (47.3%) reported that they experienced a sense of community (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Perceptions of sense of community (2022) (%)



Socioeconomic circumstances were related to importance of and experiencing a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood (Table 4). For instance, those living in the most affluent areas of Auckland (Quintile 1 areas) were more likely than others to agree that feeling a sense of community was important to them, and to agree that they felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood. Meanwhile, significantly fewer (38.9%) of those who did not have enough money said they felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood.

Table 4. Agreement with community wellbeing items – by group (2022) (%)

	Importance of sense of community	Actual experience of sense of community
Auckland total (n=2600 – 2606)	70.8	47.3
Quintile 1 (n=476 – 477)	78.0	56.1
Quintile 2 (n=467 – 468)	69.5	48.9
Quintile 3 (n=482 – 483)	67.9	40.9
Quintile 4 (n=340 – 341)	67.9	44.6
Quintile 5 (n=424 – 428)	70.0	45.2
Have more than enough money (n=315)	77.4	49.8
Have enough money (n=825 – 828)	71.4	49.2
Have just enough money (n=880 – 881)	70.8	48.2
Do not have enough money (n=456 – 458)	68.6	38.9

Depicts the proportions of each group that 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with each survey question. Statistically significant differences are shown. Green shading marks a significantly higher difference than the rest of the sample, and orange shading marks a significantly lower difference than the rest of the sample.

The broad geographic area that respondents lived in also had some impact on feeling a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood. This is expected, as area overlapped with deprivation quintile – South/East and West Auckland[4] had a larger proportion of respondents living in Quintile 5 areas (34.6% and 26.1% respectively, compared to 20.5% of all respondents living in Quintile 5 areas),

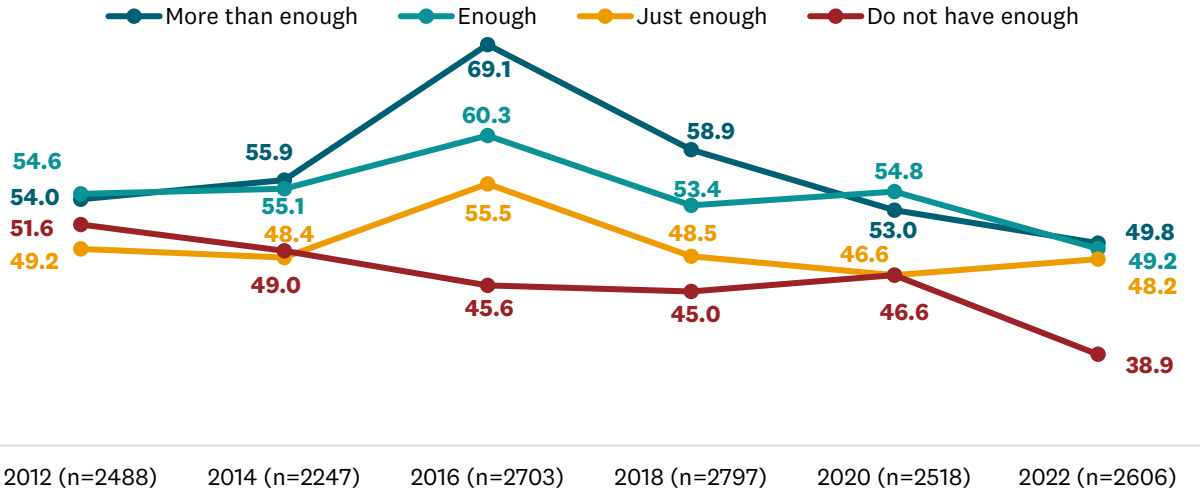
[4] South/East Auckland was defined as the following local board areas: Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Manurewa, Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Papakura, Howick, and Franklin. West Auckland was defined as: Henderson-Massey, Whau, and Waitākere Ranges local board areas.

while North Auckland[5] had larger proportions of respondents living in Quintile 1 areas (37.0%, compared to 21.9% of all respondents living in Quintile 1 areas).

Among respondents who said they had 'enough' or 'more than enough' money to meet their everyday needs, more respondents from North and West Auckland (compared to others) agreed they felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood. Fewer respondents living in Central[6] and South/East Auckland agreed they felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, regardless of how much money they reported having to meet their everyday needs.

Over time, there were notable declines in perceptions of a sense of community among specific groups, namely respondents reporting low income adequacy. In 2012, there was no difference in those who agreed they felt a sense of community, based on income adequacy. However, this had changed by 2022 – significantly fewer (38.9%) of those who did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs said they felt a sense of community with others, representing a 12.7 percentage point decline since 2012 (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Proportion who agreed they felt a sense of community with others, by income adequacy (2012-2022) (%)



Depicts proportions of each group who agreed or strongly agreed they felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood.

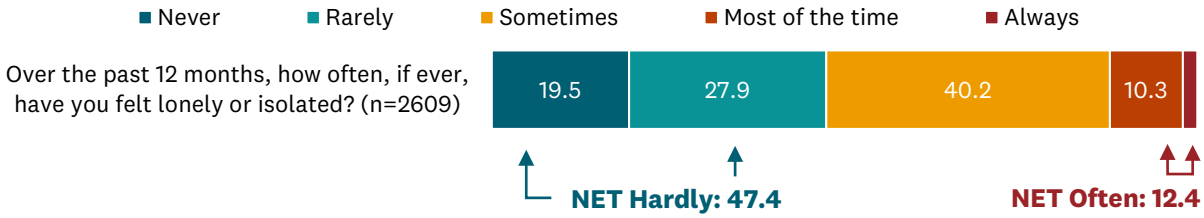
Pacific respondents were disproportionately affected, given the overlap between this group and the low income adequacy group. Between 2012 and 2022, there was a 12.1 percentage point decline (from 60.1% to 48.0%) in the proportion of Pacific respondents who agreed they felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood. There was also a noticeable decline in this measure among Indian respondents (from 61.0% to 42.7%).

[5] North Auckland was defined as the following local board areas: Rodney, Hibiscus and Bays, Upper Harbour, Kaipātiki, and Devonport-Takapuna.
[6] Central Auckland contained the following local boards: Albert-Eden, Waitematā, Waiheke, Aotea/Great Barrier, Puketāpapa, Maungakiekie-Tāmaki, and Ōrākei.

6.2 Loneliness

Almost half (47.4%) of Auckland respondents reported that they had 'never' or 'rarely' felt lonely or isolated in the 12 months prior to the survey, with around one in 10 (12.4%) noting they had felt lonely 'most of the time' or 'always' (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Experiences of loneliness in the last 12 months (2022) (%)

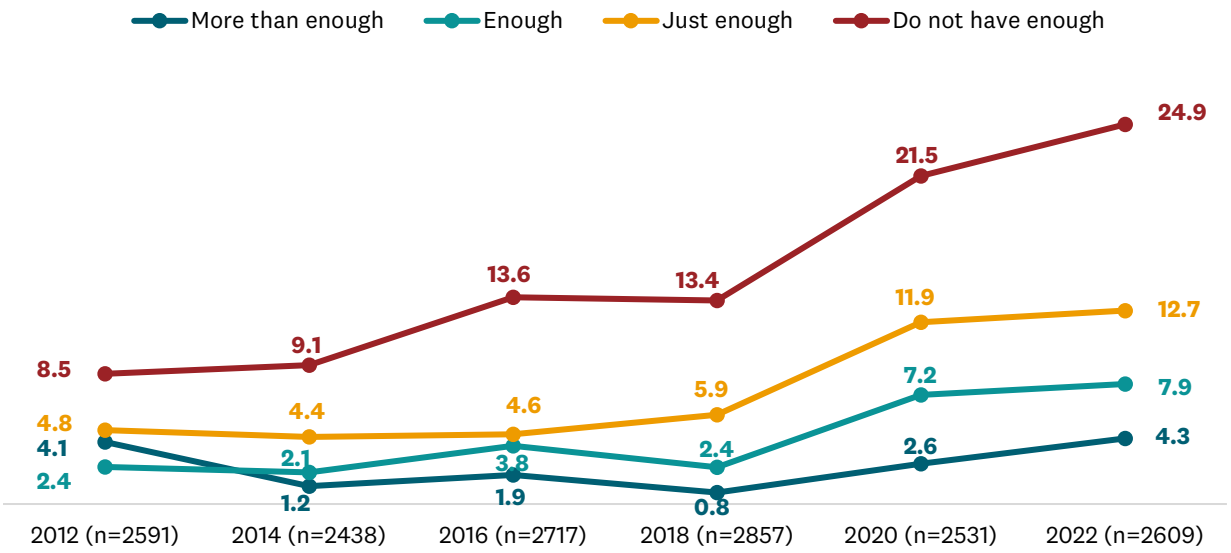


Those who said they had 'more than enough' (4.3%) money to meet their everyday needs were significantly less likely to say they had frequently felt lonely than those who said they did not have enough money (24.9%). Pacific (19.8%) and Indian (17.5%) respondents were also more likely than other ethnic groups to say they had felt frequently lonely in the 12 months prior compared to other ethnic groups (19.8% and 17.5% respectively). These results for Pacific and Indian respondents may be related to lockdown restrictions and the inability to gather in large groups and/or attend faith services.

Age also had an impact. Younger respondents (especially those aged under 25) were more likely to report feeling frequently lonely compared to older respondents. However, there was an interaction between age and income adequacy, which is expected given that income adequacy was related to age (see section 5.3). For all age groups, much larger proportions of those who did not have enough money reported feeling frequently lonely, compared to those with higher income adequacy (e.g. among those aged under 25, 36.1% of those who did not have enough money said they had felt frequently lonely, compared to 20.8% of those who said they had enough money).

Among Auckland respondents, experiences of frequent loneliness increased between 2012 and 2022, again strongly for respondents who said they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs (Figure 7). Feelings of frequent loneliness also increased for Pacific (from 10.3% to 19.8%) (particularly Samoan – from 2.2% to 17.2%) and Indian (from 7.2% to 17.5%) participants, which mirror similar findings of declining experience of sense of community found across these groups.

Figure 7. Proportion who often felt lonely in the last 12 months, by income adequacy (2012-2022) (%)



Depicts the proportions who said they 'always' or 'most of the time' felt lonely in the previous 12 months.

6.3 Access to emotional support

The majority of Auckland participants (88.4%) said they had access to emotional support in the event of a serious injury, illness, or otherwise difficult time. One in 10 (11.6%) said they did not or were unsure whether they had access to emotional support.

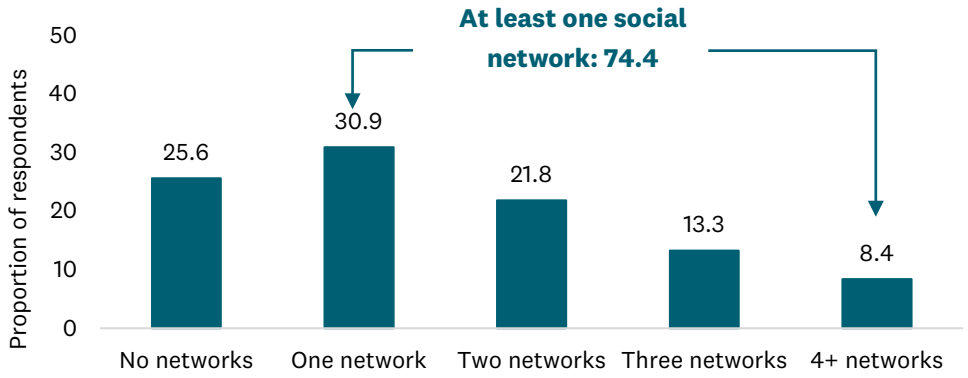
There were socioeconomic links with access to emotional support. Those who were more likely to say they had access to emotional support during a difficult time were respondents who perceived they had 'more than enough' (96.8%) or 'enough' (92.9%) money to meet their everyday needs. Those who were less likely to say they had access to emotional support were respondents who said they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs (81.9%). Although significantly lower, this is still a high level of access to emotional support overall.

Over time, Auckland respondents have reported a high level of access to emotional support during a difficult time or serious injury or illness. There have been no significant changes for any socioeconomic group or ethnic group since 2012.

6.4 Participation in networks and groups

Three-quarters (74.4%) of respondents stated they had participated in at least one social network or group in the 12 months prior to the survey. This included online networks. A quarter (25.6%) had not participated in any social network or group during this time period (Figure 9).

Figure 8. Social participation (2022) (%)

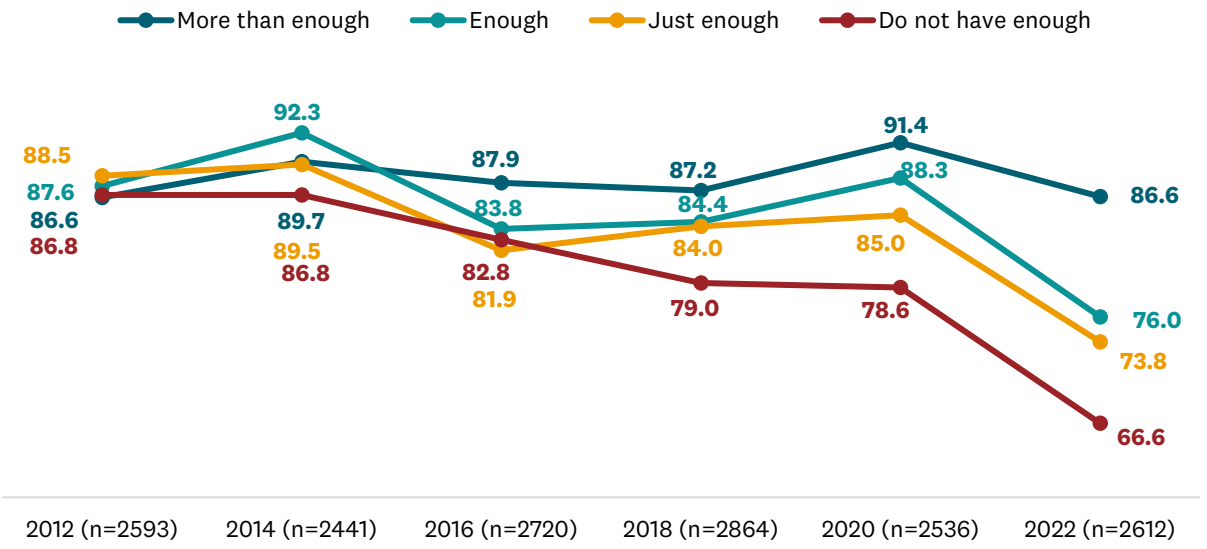


There were no statistically significant differences by deprivation quintile or ethnic group. However, there were some notable differences by reported income adequacy. A larger proportion (33.4%) of those who said they did not have enough money had not participated in any social networks or groups, compared to 13.4% per cent of those who said they had more than enough money.

Auckland respondents participated in a wide range of social networks and groups, and there were differences in the **types** of social networks that people took part in, also based on how much money they reported they had to meet everyday needs. Income can have an impact on the types of social activities and groups that respondents participate in, as some forms of social participation require a monetary fee or otherwise are enabled by greater financial flexibility and disposable income. There were indications of this in the data. For example, those in the highest income adequacy group (i.e. had more than enough money) were more likely to participate in clubs and societies, professional/work networks, group fitness or movement groups, and hobby or interest groups – all types of social networks or groups that may require a monetary fee (e.g. membership), travel time, or purchase of materials (e.g. gym gear, books, craft items, etc.) to participate.

Social participation (in at least one type of social network or group) declined for Auckland respondents since 2020, by 10.3 percentage points. This is likely related to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Prior to 2020, Auckland respondents noted higher levels of participation in social networks or groups with no change between 2012 and 2020. However, there were differences in social participation over time by perceived income adequacy (Figure 9). Between 2012 and 2022, there was a high level of social participation (and little change) among respondents who said they had more than enough money to meet their everyday needs. All other subgroups experienced a decline in social participation, of around 12 percentage points, suggesting a high financial cost to social participation and engagement.

Figure 9. Social participation, by income adequacy (2012-2022) (%)

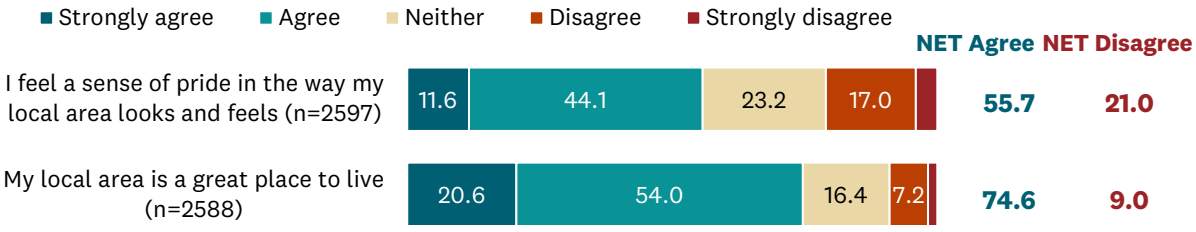


Depicts the proportions who selected at least one type of social network or group.

6.5 Connection to local area

Overall, Auckland respondents expressed a high level of attachment to their local area (74.6% agreed their local area was a great place to live) but were less satisfied (55.7%) with the look and feel of their local area (Figure 10). This disparity between attachment to local area as a great place to live and pride in the look and feel of their local area has persisted since 2012.

Figure 10. Connection and attachment to local area (2022) (%)



Respondents' perceptions of their local area were positively related to their socioeconomic circumstances (Table 5). Those with higher levels of income adequacy and those living in Quintile 1 and 2 areas were more likely to agree they were proud of the look and feel of their local area and that their local area was a great place to live. Meanwhile, those with low income adequacy and those living in Quintile 4 and 5 areas were less likely to agree with these statements.

Since the question asks about local area, we also tested the impact of broad geographic area and found lower levels of local area attachment among West and South/East Aucklanders. For example, we further examined respondents who agreed that their local area is a great place to live (see the final column of Table 5). Among those who said they had more than enough money to meet their everyday needs (85.0%), there were higher levels of agreement among North Auckland respondents (90.9%) and lower levels of agreement among West (78.0%) and South/East (76.2%) Auckland

respondents. Additionally, among those who did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs (59.9%), there were still more North Auckland respondents (72.3%) who agreed their local area was a great place to live, compared to respondents living in other parts of Auckland.

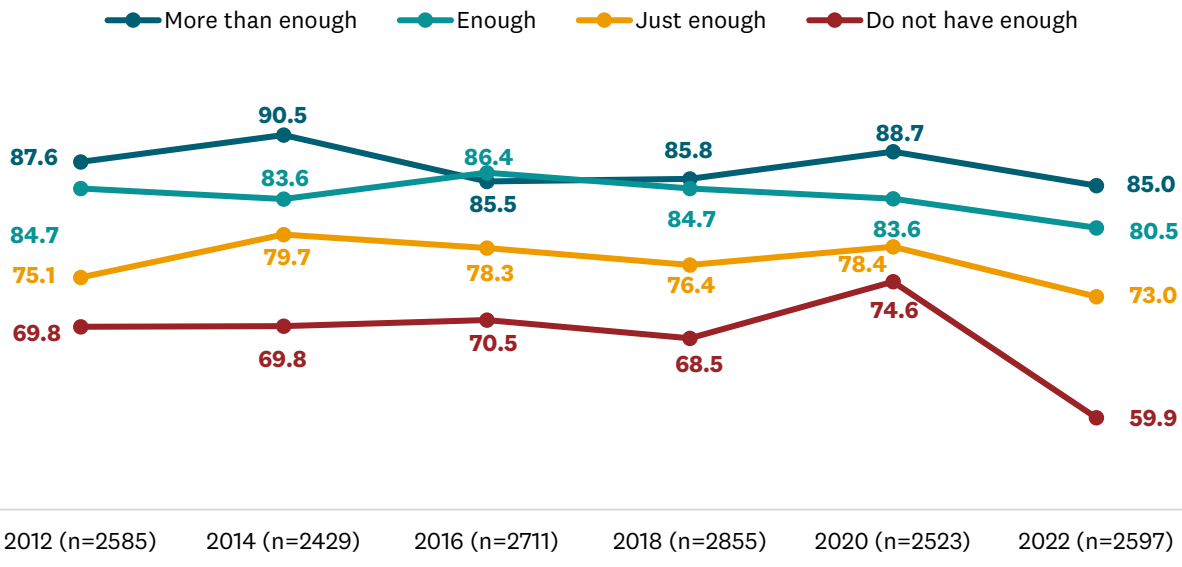
Table 5. Connection and attachment to local area – by group (2022) (%)

	Pride in look and feel of local area	Local area is a great place to live
Auckland total (n=2588 – 2597)	55.7	74.6
Quintile 1 (n=468 – 476)	70.7	82.6
Quintile 2 (n=464 – 465)	61.5	82.5
Quintile 3 (n=482 – 483)	54.6	75.1
Quintile 4 (n=337 – 339)	45.7	69.1
Quintile 5 (n=425 – 426)	45.4	62.5
Have more than enough money (n=313 – 316)	61.2	85.0
Have enough money (n=822 – 827)	60.3	80.5
Have just enough money (n=873 – 875)	53.9	73.0
Do not have enough money (n=455 – 456)	48.4	59.9

Depicts the proportions who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with each statement.
Statistically significant differences are shown. Green shading marks a significantly higher difference than the rest of the sample, and orange shading marks a significantly lower difference than the rest of the sample.

Consistent with other questions about belonging and participation, attachment and connection to local area fluctuated for Auckland respondents between 2012 and 2022, based on their income adequacy. Those who did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs experienced a decline between 2012 and 2022 in agreement that their local area was a great place to live (Figure 11).

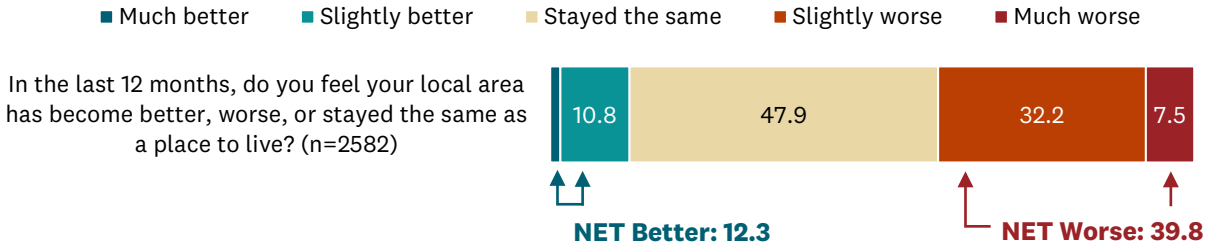
Figure 11. Proportion who agreed their local area was a great place to live, by income adequacy (2012-2022) (%)



Depicts the proportions who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement.

Respondents were asked their perceptions of how their local area had changed in the 12 months prior to the survey, which helps to provide insights on some of the group disparities in connection to their local area. Almost half of Auckland respondents (47.9%) felt their local area had stayed the same during this time period, but the next largest proportion (39.8%) felt their local area had become worse. Only one in 10 (12.3%) thought their local area had become better in this time (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Perceptions of change in local area (2022) (%)



There were small but statistically significant differences in perceptions of how their local area had changed. Half (49.9%) of those who said they did not have enough money said their local area had become worse, significantly higher than other respondents.

Respondents were asked to explain why their local area had changed in the last 12 months. Analysis of open-text comments revealed major differences related to socioeconomic circumstances. When asked to explain why their local area had become better in the prior 12 months, respondents living in Quintile 1 areas more commonly noted improvements to amenities and infrastructure in their local area, as well as improvements to green spaces.

> *Lots of new things added in the area – new shopping centres, green zones, streetlights, road quality improvements. (Respondent, area has become 'better', Quintile 1)*

> *The replanting of street gardens, including new growth on recently planted street trees, retail re-opening, a more positive attitude towards a recovery from Covid, the new children's playground once again fully enjoyed, the return of the Takapuna open-air market which is very much enjoyed for fruit and vegetables, flowers and meeting of friends. (Respondent, area has become 'better', Quintile 1)*

On the other hand, respondents living in Quintile 5 areas frequently reported a stronger sense of community spirit in their local area but did not often report amenity-related improvements.

> *There are so many organisations trying to do good for our community and make sure we are not struggling too much especially in the food area and trying to help everyone with so much. (Respondent, area has become 'better', Quintile 5)*

> *My local area before I was born and when I was young was mostly an area of interest to police due to a strong presence of gangs and maybe drugs. Now we hardly hear nor do we see any violence such as those that occurred back in the day. Therefore, I believe my local area is shifting towards a more positive and a much more healthier community. (Respondent, area has become 'better', Quintile 5)*

For those respondents who said their local area had become **worse** in the last 12 months, concerns about increased crime and fear of crime were common across all socioeconomic groups. However, some differences endured. For example, a key theme among those living in Quintile 1 areas was concern about housing density and traffic congestion as making their local area worse, affecting crime and safety.

> *Public spaces, facilities and roading have all degraded in condition. Upkeep of infrastructure and public spaces has clearly declined, and it's very noticeable. (Respondent, area has become 'worse', Quintile 1)*

> *Too much infill housing. Too many cars parked on streets. General upkeep of public places average. Long periods of time for repairs to public areas. (Respondent, area has become 'worse', Quintile 1)*

Meanwhile, those living in Quintile 5 areas reported other problems, such as poverty and people begging on the street, noise, and greater intensity of crime through greater gang presence and violent offending in their local area.

> *Too many homeless people, they need support. Young kids on the street need role models /caring parents! Too many motorbikers making too much noise, riding all over the road, cutting lines at night is even worse 'cause they don't use their lights but you can hear them close to your vehicle. (Respondent, area has become 'worse', Quintile 5)*

> *There has been a rise in crime, including theft and gang affiliated situations. It has become a much dirtier and I notice there are much more homeless in the local area. (Respondent, area has become 'worse', Quintile 5)*

7 Recognition in society

Recognition refers to the degree to which individuals feel valued and respected by others, and the degree to which diversity in general is valued by society. On the other hand, feelings of rejection can include experiences of discrimination, prejudice, intolerance, and harassment. To address this dimension of social cohesion, the Quality of Life survey offers insights into individual perceptions of cultural inclusion and participation, their attitudes towards diversity, and their perceptions of racism, discrimination, and prejudice.

Summary:

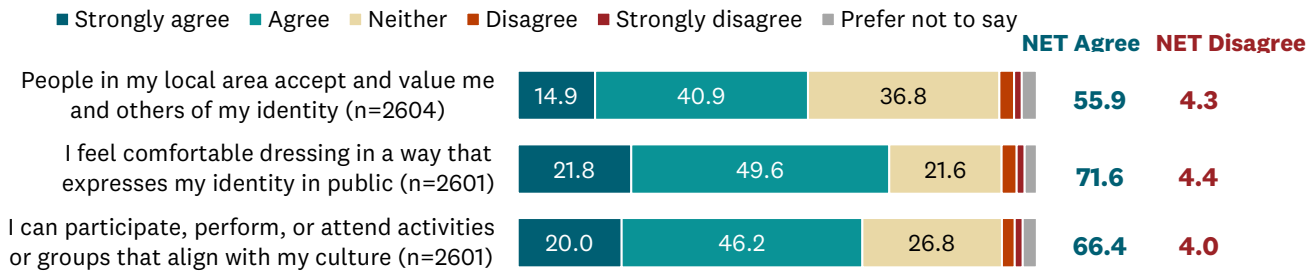
Like belonging and participation, feelings of recognition in society were associated with socioeconomic circumstances. Respondents reporting low income adequacy were less likely to feel culturally included in society as well as positive about the impacts of increasing diversity in their local area, which signals feelings of rejection and marginalisation from society. Reflecting this, they were more likely to report problems with racism, discrimination, and other forms of prejudice, pointing to tensions around societal rejection. This intersects with notions of conflict theory, which provides an important lens for understanding how those who feel most disadvantaged in society can perceive threat to their finite resources from newcomers to that society.

Again, findings showed the intersections between socioeconomic circumstances and ethnic group, in understanding feelings of recognition and how they affect perceptions of social cohesion. As with belonging and participation, Pacific respondents experienced lower levels of recognition, as did Māori participants. On the other hand, Asian participants reported feeling higher levels of recognition, as evidenced by their feelings of cultural inclusion and attitudes towards diversity. This is almost certainly affected by their tendency to have been born overseas, meaning they are less likely to view increasing diversity as problematic.

7.1 Cultural inclusion and participation in society

An important component of being recognised in society involves cultural inclusion and participation. Auckland respondents were asked a series of questions pertaining to these concepts, and analysis showed they had mixed perceptions of being recognised and valued in their communities (Figure 13). Large proportions agreed that they felt comfortable dressing in a way that expressed their identity in public (71.6% of all Auckland respondents) and that they could participate, perform, or attend activities or groups aligning with their culture (66.4%). Importantly, however, only half (55.9%) of respondents agreed that people in their local area accepted and valued them and others of their identity. This is a significant finding as it is a key indicator of perceived societal recognition and inclusion.

Figure 13. Perceptions of cultural recognition (2022) (%)



Those who experienced higher socioeconomic advantage were more likely to rate the cultural inclusion and participation items more positively compared to those experiencing greater socioeconomic disadvantage. For instance, income adequacy was statistically significant across all three items. Those with the highest income adequacy were more likely to agree across all three items while those with the lowest income adequacy were less likely to agree with all three items (Table 6).

In addition, Māori respondents were less likely than all other ethnic groups to agree with each of these three items (Table 6). Given the intersectionality of Māori respondents with respondents of lower income adequacy, further analysis was undertaken to understand whether deprivation quintile impacted different ethnic groups' experiences of cultural recognition. For Māori, living in a Quintile 1 area made some differences – 56.9 per cent of Māori living in a Quintile 1 area agreed that people in their local area accepted and valued them and others of their identity (compared to 43.8% of all Māori), while 73.3 per cent agreed that they felt comfortable dressing in a way that expresses their identity in public (compared to 66.0% of all Māori). However, the number of Māori living in a Quintile 1 area was very small (n<50), so caution should be used in interpreting this finding.

Meanwhile, Asian respondents (71.0%) were more likely than other groups to agree there were opportunities for cultural activity participation. More Indian respondents (75.3%) agreed with this statement compared to Chinese respondents (68.3%).

Table 6. Perceptions of cultural recognition – by group (2022) (%)

	Feeling accepted and valued	Comfort expressing identity in public	Ability to participate in cultural events
Auckland total (n=2601 – 2604)	55.9	71.6	66.4
Quintile 1 (n=475 – 476)	62.5	73.8	69.4
Quintile 2 (n=465 – 466)	61.9	71.6	67.6
Quintile 3 (n=483)	56.2	73.3	68.2
Quintile 4 (n=339 – 340)	49.7	67.9	62.8
Quintile 5 (n=429)	48.3	65.0	63.8
Have more than enough money (n=315)	66.0	80.8	76.2
Have enough money (n=825 – 827)	61.7	75.7	71.7
Have just enough money (n=877 – 878)	54.9	72.6	66.5
Do not have enough money (n=459)	42.5	61.4	55.1
European/Other (n=1663 – 1667)	58.0	73.4	64.6
Māori (n=438 – 439)	43.8	66.0	59.5
Pacific (n=256 – 257)	50.9	67.6	67.0
Asian (n=580)	55.6	71.3	71.0

Depicts the proportions who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with each statement.
Statistically significant differences are shown. Green shading marks a significantly higher difference than the rest of the sample, and orange shading marks a significantly lower difference than the rest of the sample.

Further analysis showed there were differences for Pacific and Asian respondents in their perceptions of cultural recognition, based on their birthplace. For example, lower proportions of both New Zealand-born Pacific (47.5%) and Asian (48.3%) respondents said they felt accepted and valued by others in their local area, compared with their overseas-born counterparts (56.5% and 57.3% respectively). More overseas-born Asian respondents (73.4%) agreed they felt comfortable dressing to express their identity in public than New Zealand-born Asian respondents (62.7%), and more overseas-born Pacific respondents (74.8%) agreed they could participate in events and activities of their own culture than New Zealand-born Pacific respondents (62.2%).

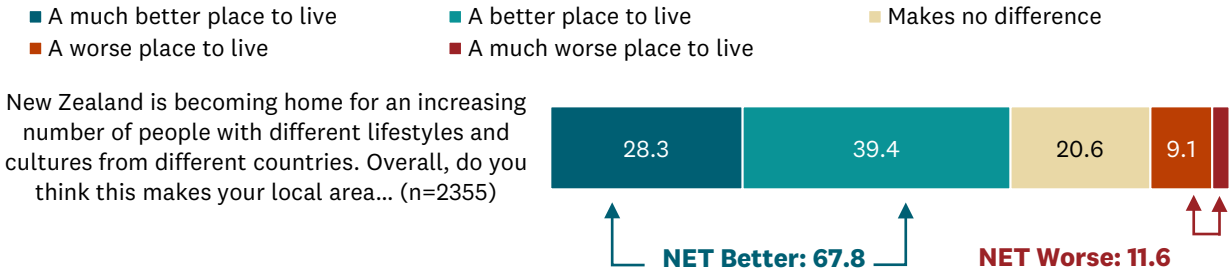
7.2 Perceived attitudes towards diversity and migration

Between 2012 and 2020[7], survey respondents were asked to provide their views on the increasing number of cultures, nations, and lifestyles represented in New Zealand, and whether this made their local area a better or worse place to live. In 2020, around two-thirds (67.8%) of Auckland

[7] The most current data for this indicator are from the 2020 survey, as this question was removed from the 2022 survey.

respondents reported that they believed this increasing diversity made their local area a better place to live (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Attitudes towards diversity in respondents' local area (2020) (%)

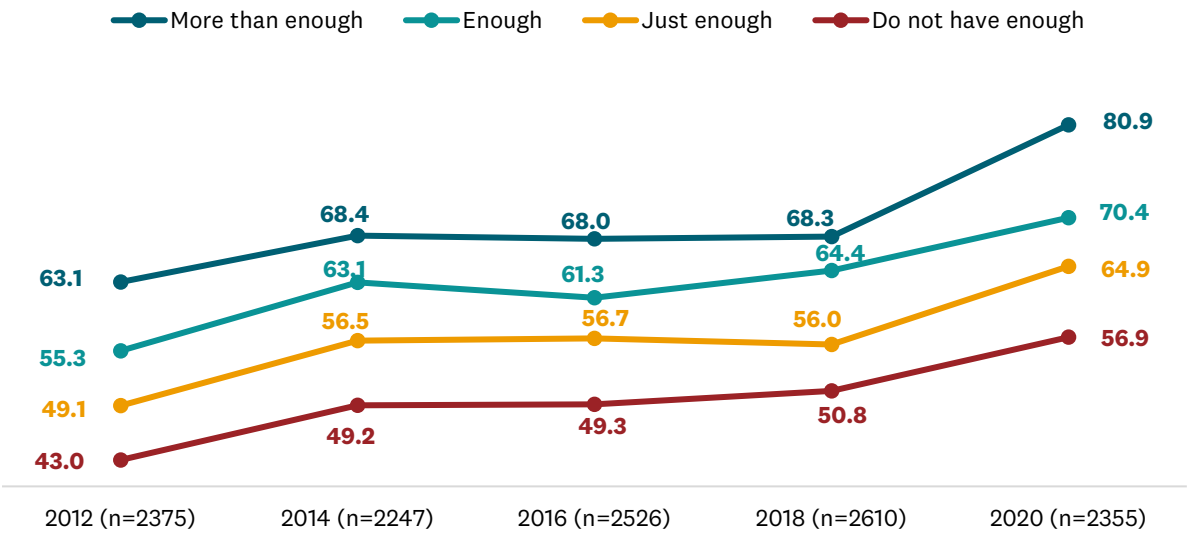


As with other survey questions, there were differences in attitudes towards diversity by income adequacy. Those who indicated they had more than enough money (80.9%) were more likely to say they thought increasing diversity made their local area a better place, while those who said they did not have enough money were less likely (56.9%). There were no statistically significant differences concerning deprivation quintile. This finding aligns with the literature on 'conflict theory', which posits that people are more likely to value migration and diversity when they perceive there are fewer pressures on resources, but tensions are heightened when people have fewer economic resources and perceive they must compete with outsiders for those resources (Albarosa & Elsner, 2022; Gijsberts et al., 2012; Meer & Tolsma, 2014; Putnam, 2007; Sturgis et al., 2014).

Asian respondents (77.0%) were more likely than other ethnic groups to report diversity and migration made their local area a greater place to live. This result is likely explained by the fact that this group was most likely to have been born overseas, compared to other ethnic groups (see section 5), and thus they are less likely to view migrants as outsiders with whom they must compete for resources and jobs. On the other hand, significantly fewer European (65.3%) and Māori (52.4%) respondents believed that increasing diversity had made their local area a better place to live – again, these two groups were most likely to have been born in New Zealand, which may explain these attitudes.

Aucklanders have experienced positive changes in their views of diversity since 2012, with an apparent spike between 2018 and 2020. There were clear changes over time based on income adequacy (Figure 15). At all timepoints, those who did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs were less likely than those who had more than enough money to say diversity made their local area a better place to live. This aligns with conflict theory, where increasing diversity and migration can pose a threat particularly to groups who are the most economically disadvantaged in society. This group may view newcomers (the outgroup) as a threat to the finite resources that they can access in society.

Figure 15. Attitudes towards diversity, by income adequacy (2012-2020) (%)

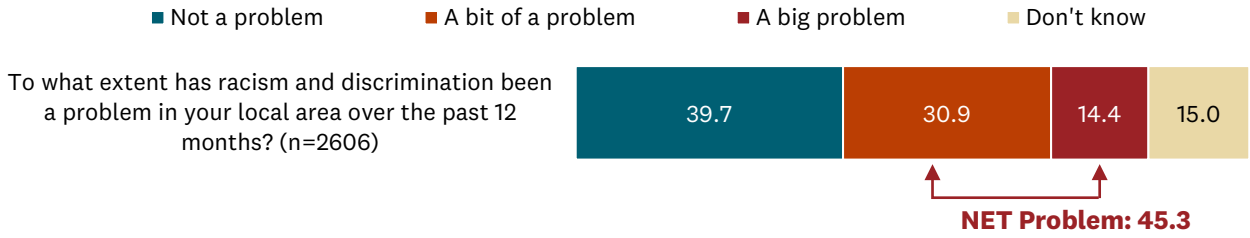


Depicts the proportions who selected 'better' or 'much better' place to live.

7.3 Perceptions of racism and discrimination as a problem in local area

Aucklanders had mixed views about the prevalence and importance of racism and discrimination as a problem in their local area in the previous 12 months (Figure 18). Almost half (45.3%) felt it had been a problem in their local area during this time, but a slightly lower proportion (39.7%) thought it had not been a problem at all.

Figure 16. Perceptions of racism and discrimination in local area (2022) (%)

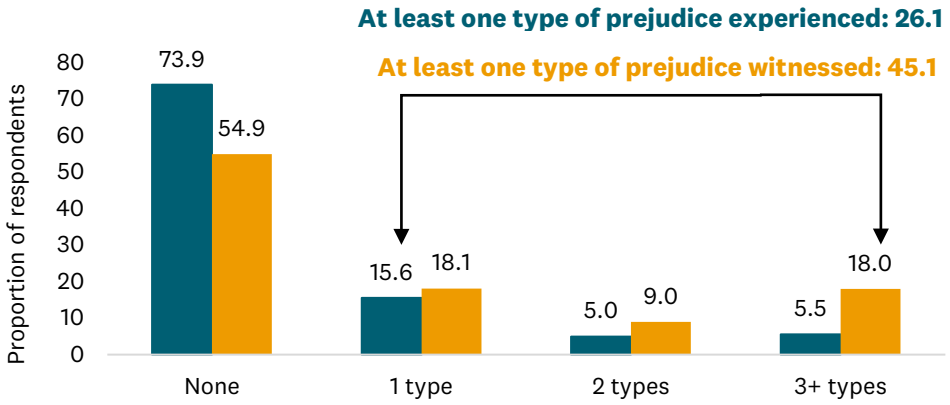


Respondents had differing views on this based on socioeconomic circumstances and ethnic group, which show the overlap of these attributes. Those more likely to say racism and discrimination had been a problem in their local area over the previous 12 months included those living in Quintile 4 (51.0%) and Quintile 5 (57.1%) areas, those reporting low income adequacy (58.2%), and Pacific (64.7%) and Māori (55.5%) respondents. However, those less likely to say it had been a problem were European respondents (39.8%), as well as those who said they had more than enough (35.9%) or enough (38.1%) money to meet their everyday needs.

7.4 Experiencing and witnessing prejudice, intolerance, or discrimination

Experiencing racism and discrimination are critical in influencing people's perceptions of social cohesion, as it can induce feelings of rejection and exclusion, rather than recognition in society. Witnessing prejudice was more common than personally experiencing it; one-quarter (26.1%) of Auckland respondents reported personally experiencing prejudice in the three months prior to the survey, while almost half (45.1%) had witnessed it occurring to someone else (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Personal experiences of and witnessing prejudice in local area (2022) (%)



The intersections between socioeconomic and ethnic groups are once again apparent. Reflecting observations in section 7.3, those more likely to have personally experienced prejudice or intolerance in the three months prior to the survey were Māori (35.9%) and Pacific (35.2%), as well as those who did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs (43.1%). Notably, Pacific respondents were more likely to report having personally experienced multiple forms of prejudice in the previous three months. For instance, they were more likely to have experienced prejudice due to their ethnicity (19%, compared to 12% of all respondents), a physical or mental health condition (12% of Pacific respondents, compared to 5% of all respondents), their religious beliefs (8% of Pacific respondents, compared to 3% of all respondents), and their COVID-19 vaccination status (22% of Pacific respondents, compared to 12% of all respondents).

8 Legitimacy

Legitimacy refers to the degree to which people are confident that public institutions protect the rights of individuals, enable trust in authority, resolve conflicts, and are responsive to people and communities. It can also refer to how confident and safe people feel in society (such as around other people), which includes perceptions of safety and crime. The Quality of Life survey is limited in measuring legitimacy, as it does not include robust measures of institutional trust. However, it can provide some insights into interpersonal trust and perceptions of safety around other people.

Summary:

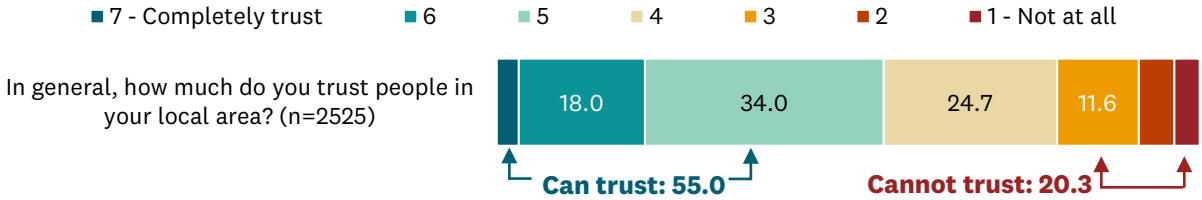
The Quality of Life data show growing concerns among Auckland respondents surrounding legitimacy, trust, and safety, with key measures showing deterioration for all groups since 2020. However, the respondents who are the most affected by these issues again mirror previous findings for belonging, participation, and recognition. They tended to experience poorer socioeconomic outcomes: Pacific respondents, those who live in the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of Auckland, and those who said they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs.

There is also concerning evidence surrounding institutional trust, with perceptions of local government decision-making likewise declining over the last decade of the survey and reaching a new low in 2022. The largest erosions in institutional trust are observed in those respondents who traditionally have experienced the highest levels of trust and confidence in authorities: those with high income adequacy and European respondents (groups which overlap a considerable degree). On the other hand, respondents who did not have enough money, as well as Māori respondents, have consistently reported negative perceptions of local government decision-making over time.

8.1 Interpersonal trust

In 2020[8], half (55.0%) of Auckland respondents said they trusted people in their local area, signifying a moderate level of interpersonal trust. One in five (20.3%) said they could not trust people in their local area (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Perceptions of interpersonal trust (2020) (%)



[8] The most current data for this indicator are from the 2020 survey, as this question was cycled out from the 2022 survey.

Interpersonal trust declined alongside socioeconomic circumstances – significantly fewer respondents living in Quintile 5 areas and those with the lowest income adequacy reported feeling like they could trust others in their local area. Ethnic group differences again aligned with these findings, as significantly fewer Māori (46.0%) and Pacific (40.4%) respondents also reported feeling like they could trust people in their local area (Table 7).

Broad geographic area and age were also explored to understand if they had impacts. Analysis showed that age (but not area) interacted with socioeconomic outcomes. Examining all respondents who said they trusted others in their local area, trust improved with age across all income adequacy groups. However, income adequacy still played a key role in interpersonal trust. For example, among those aged 65 and over, 88.8% of those with more than enough money said they trusted others in their local area, compared to 56.9% of those who did not have enough money.

Table 7. Perceptions of interpersonal trust – by group (2020) (%)

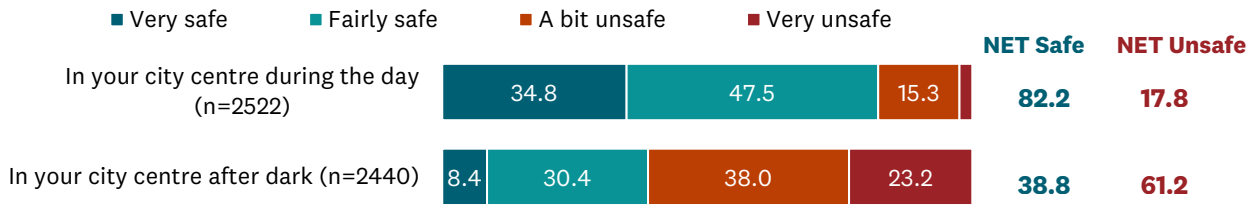
	Can trust others	Cannot trust others
Auckland total (n=2525)	55.0	20.3
Quintile 1 (n=542)	68.5	14.0
Quintile 2 (n=571)	66.3	11.5
Quintile 3 (n=504)	56.8	17.4
Quintile 4 (n=392)	44.1	22.1
Quintile 5 (n=516)	36.2	37.0
Have more than enough money (n=319)	74.1	11.0
Have enough money (n=878)	60.7	15.5
Have just enough money (n=830)	52.4	20.7
Do not have enough money (n=400)	41.0	34.1
European/Other (n=1737)	61.6	16.6
Māori (n=430)	46.0	26.4
Pacific (n=242)	40.4	32.4
Asian (n=449)	52.7	20.3

Statistically significant differences are shown. Green shading marks a significantly higher difference than the rest of the sample, and orange shading marks a significantly lower difference than the rest of the sample.

8.2 Sense of personal safety

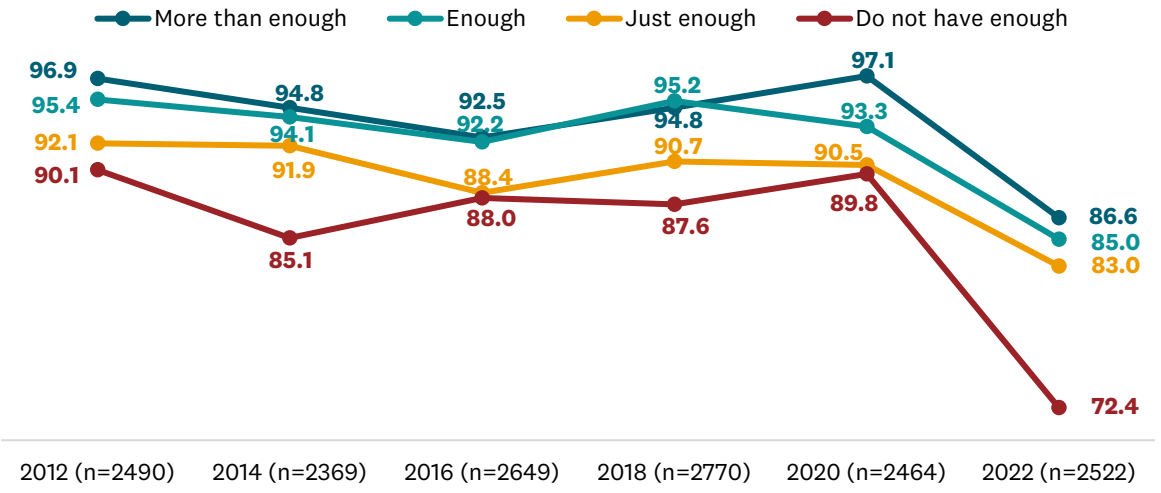
Exploring perceptions of personal safety is also important in understanding perceptions of societal legitimacy and trust in other people. Returning to 2022 data, Auckland respondents were asked about how safe they felt in their city centre during the day and after dark. Most respondents (82.2%) reported they felt safe in their city centre during the day, and there were no group differences. However, much fewer (38.8%) felt safe in their city centre after dark. Significantly fewer respondents who did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs (32.1%) felt safe in their city centre after dark (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Perceptions of personal safety in the city centre (2022) (%)



Over time, feelings of safety in the city centre, both during the day and after dark, have declined for all groups. Feelings of safety during the day remained stable between 2012 and 2020 but declined sharply between 2020 and 2022 for all groups, but particularly for those with not enough money to meet everyday needs (Figure 20), and for European/Other and Asian (especially Indian) respondents.

Figure 20. Proportions who felt safe in the city centre during the day – by income adequacy (2012-2022) (%)



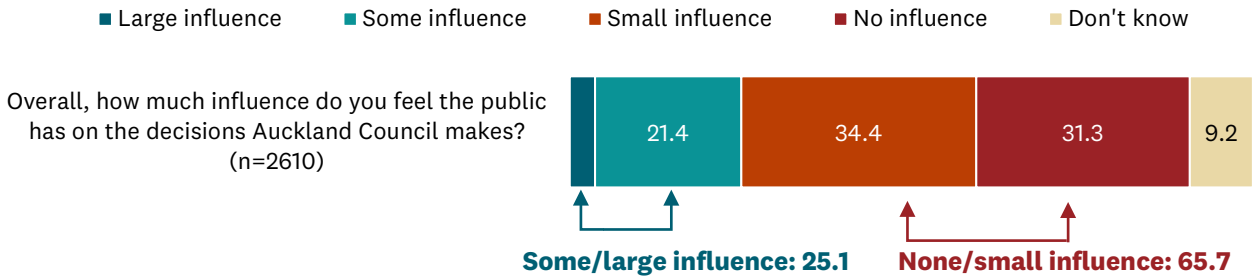
Depicts proportions who selected 'fairly safe' or 'very safe'.

Feelings of safety in the city centre after dark increased for all groups between 2012 and 2020, but again declined after that. The largest decline between 2020 and 2022 was observed for Asian respondents (from 54.6% to 37.6% stating they felt safe in the city centre after dark).

8.3 Perceptions of local government decision-making

A large proportion (65.7%) of Auckland respondents said that the public has no influence or a small influence on Auckland Council's decision-making, while only one-quarter (25.1%) felt that the public had a substantial amount of influence (Figure 21). This survey question is used as the proxy for institutional trust in this report.

Figure 21. Perceptions of public's influence on council decision-making (2022) (%)



There were statistically significant differences based on ethnic group. Despite indicating high levels of social cohesion on other domains (such as belonging, participation, inclusion, and recognition), European respondents were significantly less likely to rate positively on institutional trust (18.6% said the public had some/large influence, compared to 25.1% of all Auckland respondents).

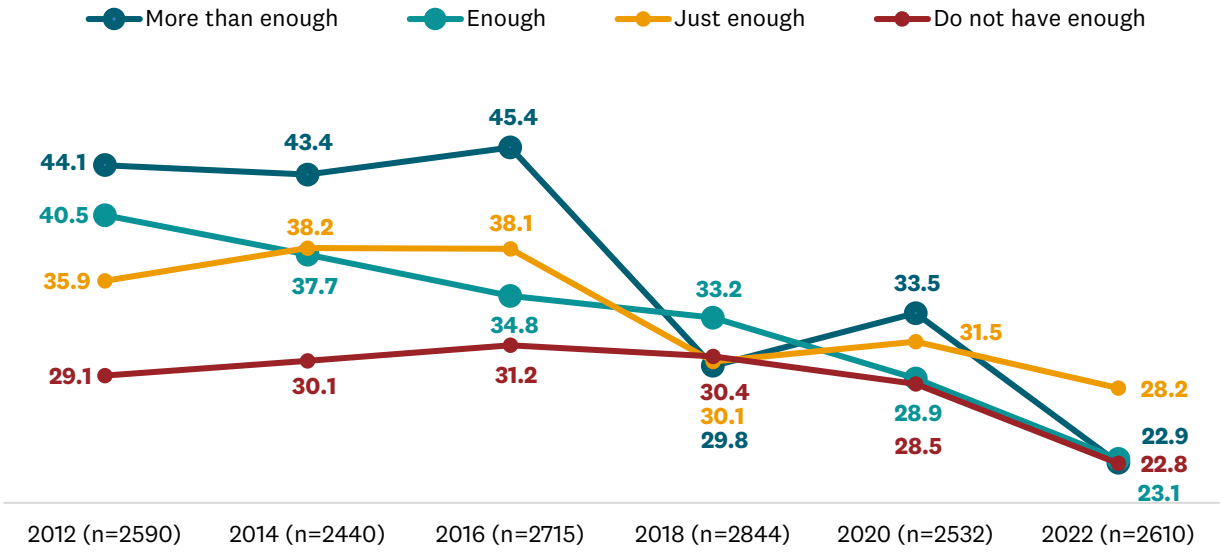
Meanwhile, despite rating items of belonging, participation, and inclusion lower compared to other groups, Pacific (33.6%) and Asian (33.3%) respondents were more likely to say the public had some or a large influence on council decision-making. These are important findings as they reinforce the multidimensionality of social cohesion as a concept, as it shows how some groups can rate themselves variably across the different dimensions.

Further analysis was conducted to understand these ethnic group differences after taking age, birthplace, and socioeconomic circumstances into account. Among both European/Other and Māori respondents, declining income adequacy corresponded with increasing proportions stating that the public has no/small influence on council decision-making. For example, among European respondents, 68.7% of those with more than enough money to meet everyday needs said the public has no/small influence, but this increased to 80.3% among those who did not have enough money. This again highlights the importance of socioeconomic circumstances in understanding social cohesion, especially attitudes towards and trust in authorities.

This pattern did not hold for Pacific and Asian respondents; instead, birthplace had a larger impact. For both Pacific and Asian respondents, larger proportions of those born in New Zealand (59.1% and 64.6% respectively) felt that the public had no/small influence on council decision-making compared to those born overseas (41.7% and 52.9% respectively). Therefore, the findings also highlight the relatively lower levels of institutional trust among some New Zealand-born populations.

Perceptions of institutional trust have declined over time (Figure 22). Among those who said they had ‘more than enough’ or ‘enough’ money to meet their everyday needs, as well as European respondents, there were large declines in those who felt the public has some/large influence on council decision-making. There were smaller declines among those who said they had ‘just enough’ or ‘not enough’ money, but these groups experienced consistently lower levels of institutional trust over time. This was similar for Māori respondents, who also had low levels of institutional trust across the last decade of the survey.

Figure 22. Proportions who felt that the public has influence on Auckland Council decision-making, by income adequacy (2012-2022) (%)



Depicts proportions who selected 'some' or 'large' influence.

9 Discussion and conclusion

This analysis aimed to explore indicators of social cohesion by socioeconomic and ethnic groups among Auckland respondents using evidence from the Quality of Life survey. The following research questions were addressed:

- What can the Quality of Life survey data tell us about social cohesion in Auckland, in relation to Aucklanders' perceptions of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition, and legitimacy?
- What differences, if any, exist in perceptions of social cohesion between groups based on socioeconomic circumstances and ethnic identification?
- To what extent have perceptions of social cohesion changed or stayed the same over time, across Aucklanders overall, and also at a sub-group level?

9.1 Widening socioeconomic inequities in social cohesion

At a high level, the findings were consistent with national-level data demonstrating that although there is an overall high level of social cohesion in New Zealand, there are certain groups (particularly Māori and Pacific peoples) for whom there are greater disparities (Te Korowai Whetū, 2022a). Likewise, the Quality of Life data showed that Auckland respondents experienced high levels of belonging, participation, recognition, and legitimacy, but there were noticeable differences across these dimensions for specific ethnic groups.

This research highlighted the usefulness of focussing on socioeconomic inequities when examining social cohesion. Firstly, analysis of the data supported existing literature that links social cohesion to socioeconomic inequality (Bécares et al., 2011; Stafford et al., 2003; Sturgis et al., 2014). The findings showed that higher levels of social inclusion and cohesion (such as feeling a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood, high levels of interpersonal trust, high levels of cultural inclusion and participation, etc.) were observed among the groups who were the best economically positioned, relative to others. Meanwhile, poorer social outcomes were consistently seen across the respondents with the highest levels of material disadvantage.

Secondly, this research highlighted the overlapping nature of ethnicity and socioeconomic outcomes. Ethnic minorities, especially those traditionally the most marginalised, continue to experience high levels of disadvantage relative to others (Loring et al., 2022; Maré et al., 2001). Māori respondents reported negative outcomes under the recognition/rejection domain of social cohesion, meaning the findings show they continue to encounter challenges with being accepted and valued in their local communities and experiencing racism and discrimination from others.

Notably, Pacific respondents experienced multiple levels of disadvantage across most domains of social cohesion, exacerbated by their greater likelihood of being part of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged parts of society. They reported greater feelings of loneliness, lower levels of trust in others, challenges with racism and discrimination, were more likely to live in the areas of Auckland with the highest socioeconomic disadvantage, and consistently reported the lowest levels of income

adequacy. Quality of Life data, therefore, provide compelling evidence of the inequities experienced by Pacific respondents and the specific need to focus on improving wellbeing and outcomes for this group.

One of the most significant findings of this research is that the data showed stark gaps between the highest and lowest socioeconomic groups for every measure that was examined, and the persistence of these disparities over the last 10 years of the survey. Experiences of social inclusion and cohesion have consistently been more negative for the most socioeconomically disadvantaged groups in society. Not only that, the disparity between the highest and lowest income adequacy groups has widened. In 2012, there were no significant wellbeing differences between the highest and lowest income adequacy groups on a range of measures (like feeling a sense of community with others, frequent experiences of loneliness, enjoyment of local area as a place to live, and social participation). However, by 2022, those in the lowest income adequacy group experienced significant deteriorations in these wellbeing measures, while those in the highest income adequacy group continued to experience high levels of wellbeing. With cost of living issues placing increasing pressure on Aucklanders, this will continue to have social ramifications particularly for those experiencing the most socioeconomic disadvantage.

Findings point to concerning deteriorations in horizontal and vertical trust measures, signalling tensions surrounding the perceived legitimacy of societal structures, institutions, and authorities. The results support other literature in recent years pointing to increasing tensions about societal trust, both between individuals and communities but also trust of citizens towards governing and institutional systems. Regarding perceptions of the public's influence on council decision-making, this measure declined to an all-time low in 2022, with the most noticeable downward pressure from those respondents who traditionally have experienced the highest levels of institutional trust: European respondents and respondents reporting high income adequacy.

9.2 Implications

This report has demonstrated clear differences in belonging, participation, and societal inclusion among Auckland respondents, using evidence from the Quality of Life survey, and in so doing, highlights socioeconomic inequities in inclusion and social cohesion.

This has clear implications for Auckland and its intentions (through the Auckland Plan 2050 and Ngā Hapori Momoho/Thriving Communities strategy) to foster belonging and participation among all Aucklanders, regardless of their background, and to foster thriving and sustainable communities. The Quality of Life data provide compelling evidence that persistent inequalities exist among Aucklanders and that these disparities are worsening in the current climate. This has clear implications for equity in the Auckland region. Aucklanders that are already thriving and doing well continue to do so, for the most part. However, there are communities that are already struggling, and due to current pressures and challenges (such as the cost of living), may be falling further behind, and who feel increasingly excluded in social and economic life.

Te Korowai Whetū (the social cohesion framework) emphasises that enabling social cohesion is not just the work of central and local government, but local communities, organisations, businesses, and people have a role in working together towards establishing and maintaining thriving and sustainable communities (Ministry of Social Development, n.d.). Auckland Council has some levers to facilitate its role in this endeavour, primarily through supporting communities to thrive through targeted investment. This is outlined in Ngā Hapori Momoho/Thriving Communities implementation plan (Auckland Council, 2022b):

- Changing the way that the council group works with communities, to become more integrated and connected (rather than ad hoc and siloed), using targeted approaches when delivering services to communities, and enabling community empowerment.
- Focussing investment to achieve wellbeing outcomes, which will involve targeting investment to meet the needs of those communities experiencing the worst outcomes (taking an equity lens to investment), and prioritise the activities that deliver on social, environmental, cultural and economic outcomes for Aucklanders. Investment will also enable a community-led approach, in that it will enable flexibility for empowered communities to define their priorities and solution.
- Monitoring and evaluating to understand the impacts for communities and further contributing to the evidence base to understand people's lived experiences.

Findings about declining institutional trust across individuals is not limited to just Auckland Council but is of concern for all democratic institutions across Aotearoa. There is an ongoing need for local government in particular to explore ways to improve trust and engagement with communities that are experiencing higher levels of discontent than before (Gluckman et al., 2023).

There are implications for future research as well, as this report highlights the ongoing need to improve our understanding of social cohesion measures, and to address data collection gaps. In the Quality of Life survey, there are limited indicators measuring institutional trust, which are an important gap to address given the emerging trends from this research. At a broader scale, it will also be essential to understand the impacts of the online world (particularly the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation) on interpersonal and institutional trust, and, therefore, social cohesion.

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Appendix A: 2022 questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this confidential survey.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY

You will need to circle an answer like this

Please circle one answer

Yes	1
No	(2)

Or like this.

Please circle one answer for each statement

Question…	1	2	(3)	4	5
Question…	1	2	3	(4)	5

When there is an instruction to go to a certain question, please make sure you circle the correct answer before going to the question as instructed

Please circle one answer

Yes	(1) → Go to Q1
No	2

If you change your mind after circling a number just cross it out and circle the correct number for your answer.

1 ⊗ (3)

Q1 Do you currently live in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland?

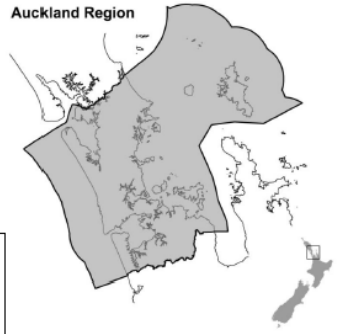
That is the whole city and surrounding areas from the Bombay Hills up to Wellsford, including the islands in the Hauraki Gulf – as shown in the map.

Please circle one answer

Yes	1	→ Go to Q2
No	2	↴

If you selected "No" you do not need to answer any more questions. You can still enter the prize draw by filling in your details at Q52. After doing so, please return your survey in the pre-paid envelope.

Auckland Region



Q2 And how long have you lived in Auckland?

Please circle one answer

Less than 1 year	1
1 year to just under 2 years	2
2 years to just under 5 years	3
5 years to just under 10 years	4
10 years or more	5

QUALITY OF LIFE

Firstly, just a few questions about your quality of life in general.

Q3 Would you say that your overall quality of life is…

Please circle one answer

Extremely poor	1
Very poor	2
Poor	3
Neither poor nor good	4
Good	5
Very good	6
Extremely good	7

Q4 Compared to 12 months ago, would you say your quality of life has…

Please circle one answer

Decreased significantly	1	
Decreased to some extent	2	
Stayed about the same	3	→ Go to Q6
Increased to some extent	4	
Increased significantly	5	

Q5 Why do you say your quality of life has changed?
Please be as detailed as possible

_____

_____

_____

THE CITY / AREA YOU LIVE IN

Now some questions about what it has been like living in your local area over the past 12 months.

Q6 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Please circle one answer for each statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel a sense of pride in the way my local area looks and feels	1	2	3	4	5
My local area is a great place to live	1	2	3	4	5

Q7 In the last 12 months, do you feel your local area has become better, worse or stayed the same as a place to live?

Please circle one answer

Much worse	1	
Slightly worse	2	
Stayed the same	3	→ Go to Q9
Slightly better	4	
Much better	5	

Q8 Why do you say your local area has changed as a place to live?
Please be as detailed as possible

_____

_____

_____

Q9 This question is about the home you currently live in.

How much do you agree or disagree that: Please circle one answer for each statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
Your housing **costs are affordable** *(by housing costs we mean things like rent or mortgage, rates, house insurance and house maintenance)*	1	2	3	4	5	6
The **type of home** you live in **suits your needs** and the needs of others in your household	1	2	3	4	5	6
The **general area or neighbourhood** your home is in **suits your needs** and the needs of others in your household	1	2	3	4	5	6

LOCAL ISSUES

Q10 In general how safe or unsafe do you feel in the following situations…

Please circle one answer for each situation

	Very unsafe	A bit unsafe	Fairly safe	Very safe	Don't know / not applicable
In your city centre during the day	1	2	3	4	5
In your city centre after dark	1	2	3	4	5

Q11 Which area do you regard as your 'city centre'? *Please write below*

_____

Q12 To what extent, if at all, has each of the following been a problem in your local area over the **past 12 months**?

Please circle one answer for each statement

	A big problem	A bit of a problem	Not a problem	Don't know
Vandalism such as graffiti or tagging, or broken windows in shops and public buildings	1	2	3	4
Theft and burglary (e.g. car, house etc.)	1	2	3	4
Dangerous driving, including drink driving and speeding	1	2	3	4
Traffic congestion	1	2	3	4
People you feel unsafe around because of their behaviour, attitude or appearance	1	2	3	4
Air pollution	1	2	3	4
Water pollution, including pollution in streams, rivers, lakes and in the sea	1	2	3	4
Noise pollution	1	2	3	4
Alcohol or drug problems or anti-social behaviour associated with the use of alcohol or drugs	1	2	3	4
People begging on the street	1	2	3	4
People sleeping rough on the streets / in vehicles	1	2	3	4
Racism or discrimination towards particular groups of people	1	2	3	4
Limited parking in your local area	1	2	3	4

TRANSPORT

Q13 In the **last 12 months**, how often have you used **public** transport?

For public transport, please include cable cars, ferries, trains and buses, including school buses. Taxis / Uber are not included as public transport.
If your usage changes on a weekly basis, please provide an average.

	Please circle one answer
At least weekly	1
At least once a month but not weekly	2
Less often than once a month	3
Did not use over the past 12 months	4
Not applicable / not available in my area	5 → Go to Q15

Q14 Thinking about public transport in your local area, based on your experiences or perceptions, do you agree or disagree with the following.

Public transport is…

Please circle one answer for each aspect

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
Affordable (before the temporary fare cuts introduced by government in April)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Safe, from crime or harassment	1	2	3	4	5	6
Safe, from catching COVID-19 and other illnesses	1	2	3	4	5	6
Easy to get to	1	2	3	4	5	6
Frequent (comes often)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reliable (comes on time)	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q15 Because of COVID-19, would you say that you use each of the following types of transport more often or less often?

Please circle one answer for each aspect

	Use more often	Use the same amount	Use less often	Don't use
A private vehicle (yours or someone else's)	1	2	3	4
Cycling as a form of transport	1	2	3	4
Walking as a form of transport	1	2	3	4
Public transport (e.g. trains, buses)	1	2	3	4

COUNCIL DECISION MAKING

Q16 Overall, how much influence do you feel the public has on the decisions Auckland Council makes?

Would you say the public has…

	Please circle one answer
No influence	1
Small influence	2
Some influence	3
Large influence	4
Don't know	5

YOUR LIFE AND WELLBEING

Q17 Which of the following applies to your current situation?

	Please circle all that apply
In paid work 30 hours or more a week	1
In paid work less than 30 hours a week	2
Not currently in paid employment	3
Caring for children under 18 (unpaid)	4
Caring for other dependents (unpaid)	5
Volunteer work	6
Student	7
Retired	8
Other (please specify) _____	9

Q18 Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the balance between your paid work and other aspects of your life such as time with your family or for leisure?

	Please circle one answer
Very dissatisfied	1
Dissatisfied	2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Satisfied	4
Very satisfied	5
Not applicable, not in paid work	6

Q19 At any time over the last two years (i.e. since COVID-19 began) have you owned or part-owned a business that employs or employed staff in New Zealand, including yourself?

Please circle **all** that apply

Yes, I currently own / part-own a business that employs staff, including myself	1	→ Go to Q20
Yes, but I no longer own this business	2	→ Go to Q21
No	3	→ Go to Q23

Q20 ***If currently own a business***

Including yourself, how many staff do you currently employ? (This includes full and part time/casual contractors).

	Please circle one answer
1 to 5 employees	1
6 to 19 employees	2
20 to 49 employees	3
50 employees or more	4

Q21 ***If no longer own the business***

Including yourself, how many staff did you employ? (This includes full and part time/casual contractors).

	Please circle one answer
1 to 5 employees	1
6 to 19 employees	2
20 to 49 employees	3
50 employees or more	4

Q22 ***Please answer if you currently own a business or have owned one in the last two years, or both.***
Have you made or did you make any of the following changes to your business as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

	Please circle all that apply	
	Currently own	Have owned in last 2 years
Reduced overhead costs where possible	1	1
Extended or increased contracts with suppliers	2	2
Terminated contracts with suppliers	3	3
Increased staff numbers or hours	4	4
Decreased staff numbers or reduced hours	5	5
Temporarily closed part, or all, of your operations (outside of lockdown)	6	6
Permanently closed part, or all, of your operations	7	7
Something else (please specify) _____	8	8
Haven't made any changes as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic	9	9

Q23 In general, how would you rate your…?

	Please circle one answer for each aspect					
	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Prefer not to say
Physical health	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mental health	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q24 In the past week, on **how many days** have you done a **total of 30 minutes** or more of physical activity, which was enough to **raise your breathing rate**?
This may include sport, traditional games, kapa haka, exercise, brisk walking or cycling for recreation or to get to and from places, and housework or physical activity that may be part of your job.

Please circle one answer							
0 days	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days	6 days	7 days
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q25 Which of the following best describes how well your total income (from all sources) meets your everyday needs for things such as accommodation, food, clothing and other necessities?

	Please circle one answer
Have more than enough money	1
Have enough money	2
Have just enough money	3
Do not have enough money	4
Prefer not to say	5

Q26 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Please circle one answer for each statement				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree
It's important to me to feel a sense of community with people in my neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5
I feel a sense of community with others in my neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5

Q27 Thinking about the social networks and groups you are part of or have been part of in the last 12 months (whether online or in person), do you belong to any of the following?

	Please circle all that apply
Faith-based group / church community	1
Cultural group (e.g. kapa haka, Samoan group, Somalian group)	2
Marae / hapū / iwi participation (e.g. Land Trust)	3
Neighbourhood group (e.g. Residents' Association, play groups)	4
Clubs and societies (e.g. sports clubs, Lions Club, RSA, etc.)	5
Group fitness or movement (e.g. yoga, tai chi, gym class, etc.)	6
Hobby or interest groups (e.g. book clubs, craft, gaming, online forums, etc.)	7
Volunteer / charity group (e.g. SPCA, Hospice, environmental group)	8
School, pre-school networks (BOT, PTA, organising raffles, field trips, etc.)	9
Professional / work networks (e.g. network of colleagues or professional association)	10
Other social network or group (please specify) _____	11
None of the above	12

Q28 Over the past 12 months how often, if ever, have you felt lonely or isolated?

	Please circle one answer
Always	1
Most of the time	2
Sometimes	3
Rarely	4
Never	5

Q29 If you were faced with a serious illness or injury, or needed support during a difficult time, is there anyone you could turn to for…

	Please circle one answer for each statement			
	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	No	Don't know / unsure
Practical support (e.g. shopping, meals, transport)	1	2	3	4
Emotional support (e.g. listening to you, giving advice)	1	2	3	4

Q30 At some time in their lives, most people experience stress.
Which statement below best applies to how often, if ever, over the past 12 months you have experienced stress that has had a negative effect on you?

Stress refers to things that negatively affect different aspects of people's lives, including work and home life, making important life decisions, their routines for taking care of household chores, leisure time and other activities.

Please circle one answer

Always	1
Most of the time	2
Sometimes	3
Rarely	4
Never	5

Q31 Please indicate for each of the five statements which is closest to how you have been feeling over the last **two weeks.**
Higher numbers mean better well-being (example: If you have felt cheerful and in good spirits more than half of the time during the last two weeks, please circle the number 3 below).

Please circle one answer for each statement

	All of the time	Most of the time	More than half of the time	Less than half of the time	Some of the time	At no time
I have felt cheerful and in good spirits	5	4	3	2	1	0
I have felt calm and relaxed	5	4	3	2	1	0
I have felt active and vigorous	5	4	3	2	1	0
I woke up feeling fresh and rested	5	4	3	2	1	0
My daily life has been filled with things that interest me	5	4	3	2	1	0

Q32 Do you have any long-term and persistent difficulty with any of the following activities?

Please circle one answer for each statement

	No difficulty	Some difficulty	A lot of difficulty	Cannot do at all	Prefer not to say
Seeing, even if wearing glasses	1	2	3	4	5
Hearing, even if using a hearing aid	1	2	3	4	5
Walking or climbing steps	1	2	3	4	5
Remembering or concentrating	1	2	3	4	5
Self-care, like washing all over or dressing	1	2	3	4	5
Communicating in your everyday language, understanding or being understood by others	1	2	3	4	5

Q33 Overall, thinking about the last year, what impact has COVID-19 had on…?

Please circle one answer for each aspect

	Strong negative impact	Some negative impact	No impact	Some positive impact	Strong positive impact	Not applicable
Your physical health	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your mental health	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your job security	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your financial situation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your work-life balance	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your children's (under 18 years) educational progress	1	2	3	4	5	6
Your children's (under 18 years) overall wellbeing	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q34 Have you, or has anyone in your household, delayed seeking any health-related treatment or advice due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Please circle one answer

Yes	1	→ Go to Q35
No	2	
Don't know	3	→ Go to Q36

Q35 For what reasons did you, or did someone in your household delay seeking this treatment or advice?

Please circle all that apply

Concerned about catching COVID-19	1
Were self-isolating because exposed to / had COVID-19	2
Wanted to avoid putting pressure on health services	3
Concerned about leaving home	4
Concerned about the financial cost	5
Did not know how to access help	6
Was not able to access help	7
Thought help was unavailable	8
My health provider had to postpone my appointment or treatment	9
Other (please specify)	10

_____

_____

CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Q36 Thinking about living in your local area, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Please circle **one** answer for each statement

	Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to say
People in my local area accept and value me and others of my identity (e.g., sexual, gender, ethnic, cultural, faith)	1	2	3	4	5	9
I feel comfortable dressing in a way that expresses my identity in public (e.g., sexual, gender, ethnic, cultural, faith)	1	2	3	4	5	9
I can participate, perform, or attend activities or groups that align with my culture	1	2	3	4	5	9

Q37 In the **last three months** in **your local area**, have you **personally experienced** prejudice or intolerance, or been treated unfairly or excluded, because of your…

Please circle **one** answer for each statement

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Gender	1	2	3
Age	1	2	3
Ethnicity	1	2	3
Physical or mental health condition	1	2	3
Sexual orientation	1	2	3
Religious beliefs	1	2	3
COVID-19 vaccination status	1	2	3

Q38 In the **last three months** in your local area, have you **witnessed anyone showing** prejudice or intolerance towards a person other than yourself, or treating them unfairly or excluding them, because of their…

Please circle **one** answer for each statement

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Gender	1	2	3
Age	1	2	3
Ethnicity	1	2	3
Physical or mental health condition	1	2	3
Sexual orientation	1	2	3
Religious beliefs	1	2	3
COVID-19 vaccination status	1	2	3

CLIMATE CHANGE

Q39 Over the last 12 months, what climate actions (if any) have you taken on an ongoing basis?

Please circle **all** that apply

Transport actions (e.g., choosing to walk, bike or bus, flying less, driving an electric vehicle, car sharing)	1	Food actions (e.g., eating more plant-based foods, growing your own food, shopping locally/ seasonally, composting)	5
Managing waste actions (e.g., reducing food/organic waste going to landfill)	2	Talked about climate change issues or solutions (e.g. friends, family, colleagues)	6
Purchasing actions (e.g., buying fewer products, buying less plastics or single use disposable products)	3	Anything else (please specify) _____	7
Energy actions (e.g., upgrading your home to reduce electricity use)	4	None of these	8
		Don't know	9

Q40 To what extent do you personally worry about the impact of climate change on the future of **Auckland** and residents of Auckland?

Please circle **one** answer

Not at all worried	1
A little worried	2
Worried	3
Very worried	4
I don't know enough about climate change	5
I don't believe in climate change	6

DEMOGRAPHICS

Lastly, a few questions about you. This is so we can ensure we hear from a diverse range of people who live in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Q41 Are you…

Please circle **one** answer

Male	1
Female	2
Another gender (please specify) _____	3
Prefer not to say	4

Q42 Do you consider yourself to be transgender?

Please circle **one** answer

Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3
Prefer not to say	4

Q43 Which of the following options best describes how you think about yourself...

Please circle **one** answer

Heterosexual or straight	1
Gay or lesbian	2
Bisexual	3
Other (please specify) _____	4
I don't know	5
Prefer not to say	6

Q44 Were you born in New Zealand?

Please circle **one** answer

Yes	1	→ Go to Q46
No	2	→ Go to Q45

Q45 How many years have you lived in New Zealand?

Please circle **one** answer

Less than 1 year	1
1 year to just under 2 years	2
2 years to just under 5 years	3
5 years to just under 10 years	4
10 years or more	5

Q46 Which ethnic group, or groups, do you belong to?

Please circle all that apply

New Zealand European	1
Māori	2
Samoan	3
Cook Island Māori	4
Tongan	5
Niuean	6
Chinese	7
Indian	8
Filipino	9
Korean	10
Other (please specify) _____	11
Prefer not to say	12
Don't know	13

Q47 Are you…

Please circle one answer

Less than 18 years	1
18-19 years	2
20-24 years	3
25-29 years	4
30-34 years	5
35-39 years	6
40-44 years	7
45-49 years	8
50-54 years	9
55-59 years	10
60-64 years	11
65-69 years	12
70-74 years	13
75+ years	14

Q48 What type of home do you currently live in?

Please circle one answer

Stand-alone house on a section	1	High-rise apartment block (8 storeys or higher)	5
Town house or terraced house (houses side by side)	2	Lifestyle block or farm homestead	6
Low-rise apartment block (2 or 3 storeys)	3	Other (please specify) _____	7
Mid-rise apartment block (4 to 7 storeys)	4		

Q49 Who owns the home that you live in?

Please circle one answer

I personally or jointly own it with a mortgage	1	A local authority or city council owns it	6
I personally or jointly own it without a mortgage	2	Kāinga Ora (Housing New Zealand) owns it	7
A family trust owns it	3	Other State landlord (such as Department of Conservation, Ministry of Education) owns it	8
Parents / other family members or partner own it	4	A social service agency or community housing provider (e.g. the Salvation Army, New Zealand Housing Foundation) owns it	9
A private landlord who is NOT related to me owns it	5	Don't know	10

Q50 How many people live in your household, including yourself?

By live in your household we mean anyone who lives in your house, or in sleep-outs, Granny flats etc. on the same property. If you live in a retirement village, apartment building or hostel, please answer for how many people live in your unit only.

Please write the number in the box. ☐

Q51 Which best describes your household's annual income (from all sources) before tax?

Please circle one answer

$20,000 or less	1	$100,001 - $150,000	6
$20,001 - $40,000	2	$150,001 - $200,000	7
$40,001 - $60,000	3	$200,001 or more	8
$60,001 - $80,000	4	Prefer not to say	9
$80,001 - $100,000	5	Don't know	10

Q52 OPTIONAL: Please fill in your contact details below so that we are able to contact you if you are one of the prize draw winners or if we have any questions about your questionnaire (e.g. if we can't read your response).

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Q53 It is likely that more research will be carried out by your council on the sorts of topics covered in this survey. Are you willing to provide your contact details so that your council (or a research company on their behalf) could contact you and invite you to take part in future research?

Please note that providing your contact details does not put you under any obligation to participate.

Please circle one answer

Yes	1
No	2

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please check that you have completed all pages of the questionnaire and then put the completed questionnaire in the Freepost envelope provided or any envelope (no stamp required) and post it to:

FreePost Authority Number 196397
Survey Returns Team, NielsenIQ
Private Bag 93500
Takapuna, Auckland 0740
New Zealand

If you have any questions please call 0800 400 402

Appendix B: Analytical variables

Table 8. Variables used in analysis.

Variable name	Full survey question wording	Time series
In 2022		
Importance of feeling a sense of community	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?: It's important to me to feel a sense of community with people in my neighbourhood (1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree)	2012-2022
Actual experience of feeling a sense of community	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?: I feel a sense of community with others in my neighbourhood (1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree)	2012-2022
Loneliness	Over the past 12 months how often, if ever, have you felt lonely or isolated? (1 – Always, 2 – Most of the time, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Rarely, 5 – Never)	2012-2022
Emotional support	If you were faced with a serious illness or injury, or needed support during a difficult time, is there anyone you could turn to for: Emotional support (e.g. listening to you, giving advice) (1 – Yes, definitely, 2 – Yes, probably, 3 – No, 4 – Don't know/Unsure)	N/A
Social participation	Thinking about the social networks and groups you are part of or have been part of in the last 12 months (whether online or in person), do you belong to any of the following?	2012-2022
Pride in local area	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?: I feel a sense of pride in the way my local area looks and feels (1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree).	2012-2022
Perception that local area is a great place to live	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?: My local area is a great place to live (1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree).	2012-2022
Feeling accepted and valued by others	Thinking about living in your local area, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?: People in my local area accept and value me and others of my identity (e.g. sexual, gender, ethnic, cultural, faith) (1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree, 6 – Prefer not to say).	N/A
Comfort expressing identity in public	Thinking about living in your local area, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?: I feel comfortable dressing in a way that expresses my identity in public (e.g. sexual, gender, ethnic, cultural, faith) (1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree, 6 – Prefer not to say).	N/A
Cultural participation	Thinking about living in your local area, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?: I can participate, perform, or attend activities or groups that align with my culture. (1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree, 6 – Prefer not to say).	N/A
Personal experience of prejudice	In the last three months in your local area, have you personally experienced prejudice or intolerance, or been treated unfairly or excluded, because of your (gender, age, ethnicity, physical or mental health condition, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, COVID-19 vaccination status)?	N/A
Witnessing prejudice towards others	In the last three months in your local area, have you witnessed anyone showing prejudice or intolerance towards a person other	N/A

Variable name	Full survey question wording	Time series
	than yourself, or treating them unfairly or excluding them, because of their (gender, age, ethnicity, physical or mental health condition, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, COVID-19 vaccination status)?	
Perceptions of racism and discrimination as a problem	To what extent, if at all, has each of the following been a problem in your local area over the past 12 months?: Racism and discrimination towards particular groups of people (1 – Not a problem, 2 – A bit of a problem, 3 – A big problem, 4 – Don't know)	N/A
Personal safety – city centre during the day	In general how safe or unsafe do you feel in the following situations?: In your city centre during the day (1 – Very unsafe, 2 – A bit unsafe, 3 – Fairly safe, 4 – Very safe, 5 – Don't know/not applicable)	2012-2022
Personal safety – city centre after dark	In general how safe or unsafe do you feel in the following situations?: In your city centre after dark (1 – Very unsafe, 2 – A bit unsafe, 3 – Fairly safe, 4 – Very safe, 5 – Don't know/not applicable)	2012-2022
Confidence in local government decision-making	Overall, how much influence do you feel the public has on the decisions Auckland Council makes? (1 – No influence, 2 – Small influence, 3 – Some influence, 4 – Large influence, 5 – Don't know)	2012-2022
Physical health [a]	In general, how would you rate your… Physical health (1 – Poor, 2 – Fair, 3 – Good, 4 – Very good, 5 – Excellent, 6 – Prefer not to say)	N/A
Mental health	In general, how would you rate your… Mental health (1 – Poor, 2 – Fair, 3 – Good, 4 – Very good, 5 – Excellent, 6 – Prefer not to say)	N/A
Stress	At some time in their lives, most people experience stress. Which statement below best applies to how often, if ever, over the past 12 months you have experienced stress that has had a negative effect on you? (Stress refers to things that negatively affect different aspects of people's lives, including work and home life, making important life decisions, their routines for taking care of household chores, leisure time and other activities) (1 – Always, 2 – Most of the time, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Rarely, 5 – Never)	2012-2022
In 2020		
Perceived attitudes towards diversity	New Zealand is becoming home for an increasing number of people with different lifestyles and cultures from different countries. Overall, do you think this makes your local area…? (1 – A much worse place to live, 2 – A worse place to live, 3 – Makes no difference, 4 – A better place to live, 5 – A much better place to live, 6 – Not applicable, there are few or no different cultures and lifestyles here, 7 – Don't know)	2012-2020
Interpersonal trust	In general, how much do you trust most people in your local area? (7-pt scale, where 1 – Not at all, and 7 – Completely)	N/A

Notes:

a) The 2012 to 2018 surveys asked respondents to rate their overall health and was split into 'physical health' and 'mental health' in 2020. No time series analysis is presented as a result.

Appendix C: Auckland sample details

Table 9. Demographic breakdown of the 2022 Auckland sample (total n=2612)

Subgroup	Unweighted sample		Weighted sample	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Age				
18-24	314	12.0	354	13.6
25-39	750	28.7	840	32.1
40-49	393	15.0	419	16.1
50-64	627	24.0	586	22.4
65+	528	20.2	413	15.8
Gender				
Male	1221	46.7	1276	48.8
Female	1389	53.2	1336	51.1
Ethnic group				
New Zealand European / Other	1672	66.1	1421	56.2
Māori	441	17.4	248	9.8
Pacific	258	10.2	328	13.0
Asian/Indian	581	23.0	745	29.5
Area				
North	648	24.8	642	24.6
West	368	14.1	409	15.7
Central	778	29.8	718	27.5
South	617	23.6	608	23.3
East	201	7.7	235	9.0
Deprivation quintile				
Quintile 1	477	21.7	483	21.9
Quintile 2	468	21.3	462	20.9
Quintile 3	485	22.0	466	21.1
Quintile 4	341	15.5	346	15.6
Quintile 5	431	19.6	453	20.5

Find out more: phone 09 301 0101, email
rimu@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or visit
aucklandcouncil.govt.nz and knowledgeauckland.org.nz

Auckland Council
Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau