How Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland is Changing
An Overview of Demographic Shifts

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February 2026

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Executive Summary

Four significant long-term shifts are shaping Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland: the population is growing, ageing, becoming more culturally diverse, and continuing to experience socioeconomic disparities. Aucklanders' cultural, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics differ significantly across the region, meaning these changes are occurring unevenly in different areas. These shifts are happening concurrently and influence each other.

This report broadly traces these shifts using available data drawn primarily from Stats NZ's sub-national population estimates and projections, the New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, consenting data and the biennial Quality of Life Survey. It is not a full and comprehensive study but does provide an overview of patterns and trends.

Growth

Auckland's population was estimated at 1,816,000 in 2025; an increase of 17,700 people since 2024. By 2038 the population is projected to be over 2 million and reach 2.3 million by 2048. Most of Auckland's growth in recent years has been from international migration.

Ageing

Auckland's population is experiencing a gradual shift in the proportion and number of residents in older age groups. For example, the number of Auckland residents aged 65 years and over increased by 116,100 in the period 1996 to 2023 and is projected to reach 452,650 by 2048. The proportion of people in Auckland aged 65 years and over is also increasing (10.3% in 1996, 13.3% in 2023).

Diversity

The diversity of Auckland's population is dynamic and continues to change over time.

Limited time series data on people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, intersex, or have other minority genders or sexual identities (LGBTIQ+) hinders accurate representation of how this population is changing within Auckland, but the 2023 Census counted 57,324 Aucklanders (4.9%) in this community.

In 2023, the Stats NZ Health Disability survey estimated that 14 per cent of people living in a household in the Auckland region were disabled.

There has been a steady decrease between 2001 and 2023 in the proportion of Aucklanders identifying with European ethnic groups, from 68.5 per cent in 2001 to 49.8 per cent in 2023, while the proportion identifying with Asian ethnic groups has increased from 13.8 per cent to 31.3 per cent over that time. There have been gradual increases in the proportion of both Māori and Pacific Peoples over this time.

The proportion of Aucklanders born overseas has increased from 39 per cent in 2013 to 43 per cent in 2023. Increasing proportions of people in Auckland were born in Asia – from 15.4 per cent in 2013 to 20.7 per cent in 2023. In recent decades the largest numbers of Asian-born Aucklanders have come from the Philippines, China, and India.

 Socioeconomic disparity

in 2023, Auckland had a higher proportion of areas ranked decile 10 (most deprived) on the NZ Dep Index and a smaller proportion of areas in decile 1 (least deprived) compared to New Zealand overall. Areas in southern and western urban Auckland include some of the most relatively deprived areas, while the least deprived areas are in northern urban and rural areas, central-eastern urban areas, and some areas in rural southern Auckland.

The proportion of Auckland households who own their home has decreased over time. In 2023, 59.5 per cent of Auckland households owned their home, down from 73.9 per cent in 1986.

While the overall proportion of the Auckland working age population in the labour force has increased over time from 67 per cent in 1996 to 73 per cent in 2025, the proportion of people who are employed is cyclical in response to changes in global economic markets. Similarly, the number and proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) varies over time. The youth NEET rate for Māori and Pacific has been consistently higher than European or Asian by approximately 10 percentage points. In March 2025 the youth NEET rate for Māori was 23.1 per cent and 20.2 per cent for Pacific, compared with 10.4 per cent for European and 10.9 for Asian.

The proportion of Aucklanders who participated in the Quality of Life Survey who reported having 'enough' or 'more than enough' money to meet their everyday needs dropped from 48 per cent in 2022 to 33 per cent in 2024, and the proportion reporting having 'just enough money' increased to 43 per cent.

Concluding thoughts

The shifts indicated in this report are not occurring evenly, with clear geographic variations across local board areas, reflecting differences in housing development, population age structures and ethnic group distribution. The same areas experiencing growth and diversification are often those facing significant socioeconomic challenges, including higher youth NEET rates and lower home ownership levels.

The interplay between these factors underscores the complexity of planning for a city like Auckland, which, as New Zealand's primate city, differs significantly from other New Zealand centres, yet shares many characteristics with cities internationally.

Contents

1   Introduction

This report briefly describes key demographic and social changes affecting Tāmaki Makaurau/ Auckland. It discusses four long-term shifts shaping the region: Auckland's population is growing, ageing, becoming more culturally diverse, and experiencing socioeconomic disparities. Aucklanders' cultural, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics differ significantly across the region, meaning these changes are occurring unevenly in different areas. These shifts are happening concurrently and influence each other.

Auckland has been described as a 'primate city' – a city more than twice the size and significance of the next largest urban centre in the country. The demographic shifts described in the paper are evident in urban areas globally, and Auckland Council can gain insight into their potential implications by observing how comparable cities are responding.

The data in this paper are drawn primarily from the New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, supplemented by Stats NZ's population estimates, subnational population projections, Household Disability Survey, Household Labour Force Survey, as well as Auckland Council's Auckland Growth Scenario, consenting data and the Quality of Life Survey[1]. It was prepared using available data.

The report is not a full and comprehensive study but does provide an overview of broad patterns and trends using available data.

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[1] The Quality of Life Survey is a joint project between Auckland Council and other urban New Zealand councils. For more information see: https://www.qualityoflifeproject.govt.nz/

2   Auckland's population is growing

Auckland's population is on a growth trajectory. The population in 2025 was estimated at 1,816,000; an increase of 17,700 people since 2024 (Figure 1). By 2037 the population is projected to be over 2 million and reach 2.3 million by 2048.

Figure 1: Auckland population estimates (blue) and projections (orange), by year (counts)

Source: Stats NZ subnational population estimates at 30 June 1996-2025 and Stats NZ subnational population projections, 2023 (base)-2053

In the 12 months to 30 June 2025, net international migration (i.e. people moving to Auckland from overseas minus people leaving for overseas) was 9500, a significant drop from 36,200 in the 12 months prior. Natural increase (i.e. births minus deaths) for that period was 11,400. Rates of natural increase tend to remain consistent while migration levels vary over time.

All local board areas have experienced an increase in their population for many years. The Howick Local Board Area has the largest population, which more than doubled in size from 80,900 people in 1996 to 173,200 in 2025[2]. The population of Rodney and Papakura Local Board Areas also doubled over this period: Rodney from 39,000 in 1996 to 83,400 in 2025, and Papakura from 38,000 in 1996 to 84,200 in 2025. Upper Harbour has also experienced significant population growth, increasing from 24,300 in 1996 to 84,500 in 2025 – an increase of 60,200 people.

Some areas of greatest population growth correspond with the largest proportions of residential dwellings consented[3]. Between 2013 and 2025, the largest numbers of dwellings consented were in Henderson-Massey (13,819 dwellings or 8.5% of all dwellings) and Hibiscus and Bays (12,517 dwellings or 8.0% of all dwellings). Upper Harbour (n=12,525 or 7.7%), Howick (n=12,517 or 7.7%) and Papakura (n=12,038 or 7.4%) also had some of the highest numbers of dwellings consented between 2013 and 2025. These three local board areas also saw the largest numbers of population increase over this time. Upper Harbour increased by 27,700 people, Howick by 38,200 people and Papakura by 36,000 people.

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[2] Using local board boundaries as at 2025. There are 21 Local Boards in Auckland that provide governance at the local level within Auckland Council.
[3] Source: https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/publications/auckland-monthly-housing-update-datasheet

3   Auckland's population is ageing

Not only are there more people living in Auckland in general, but there are increasing numbers of older people, and they make up a greater proportion of Auckland's population.[4] As Figure 2 indicates, the number of people in Auckland aged 65 years and over more than doubled from 1996 to 2023 (112,000 to 237,000), and is projected to reach 452,650 people by 2048.
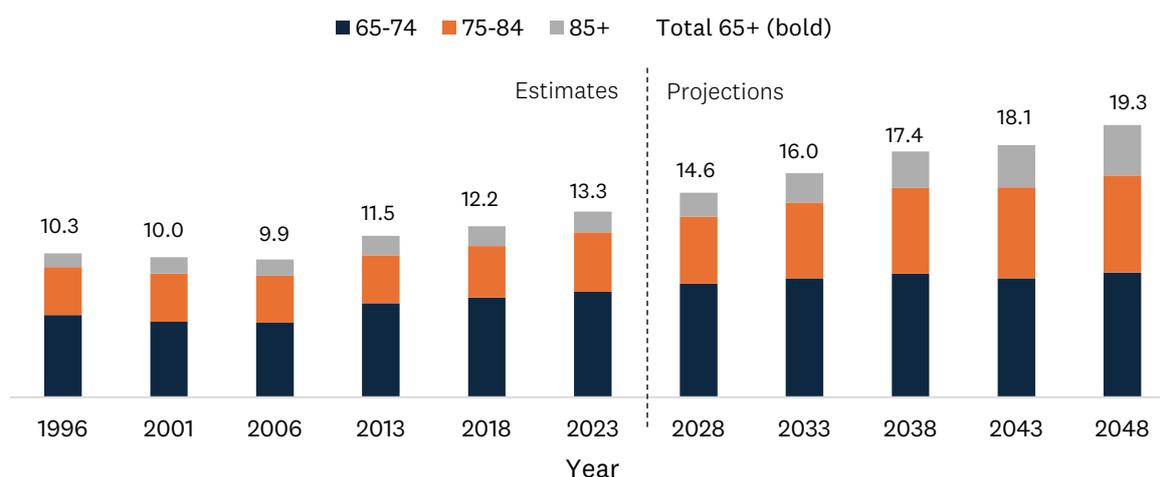
Figure 2: Number of people 65 years and over in Auckland over time, by age bracket
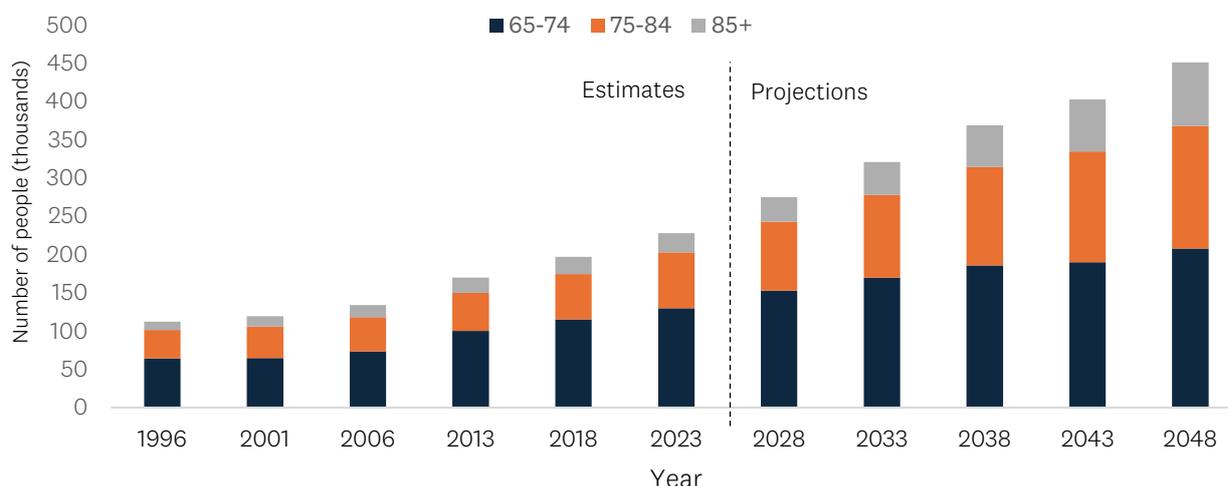
Source: Stats NZ subnational population estimates at 30 June 1996-2025 and Stats NZ subnational population projections, 2023 (base)-2053

The proportion of people in Auckland aged 65 years and over is increasing (Figure 3). In 1996, 10.3 per cent of Auckland's population was aged 65 and over. This proportion increased to 13.3 per cent by 2023. The proportion in this age group is projected to reach 19.3 per cent by 2048.

Figure 3: Proportion of people 65 years and over in Auckland over time, by age bracket (%)

Source: Stats NZ subnational population estimates at 30 June 1996-2025 and Stats NZ subnational population projections, 2023 (base)-2053.

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[4] The demographic phenomenon of population ageing is occurring across New Zealand, as well as many other countries. It has several drivers including improvements in life expectancy and longevity, combined with a decline in birth rates, which decreases the proportion of the population that is younger and thereby increases the proportion that is older.

The distribution of those aged 65 years and over varies across local board areas. Stats NZ population estimates released in 2025 show that Waiheke (25.7%) and Aotea/Great Barrier (28.8%) were the local board areas with the largest proportion of their population aged 65 years and over. The southern local board areas of Māngere-Ōtāhuhu (9.5%), Papakura (9.0%), Manurewa (9.2) and Ōtara-Papatoetoe (8.7%) had the smallest proportion of their populations aged 65 years and over.

These patterns are projected to continue. By 2048, it is projected that 34 per cent of the Aotea/Great Barrier population and 36 per cent of the Waiheke population will be 65 years and over, while Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Papakura, Manurewa and Ōtara-Papatoetoe will continue to have relatively lower proportions.

While overall the population is ageing, Auckland has a sizeable population of people aged under 15 years. Stats NZ population estimates calculate that 18.7 per cent of Auckland's population were children (those aged 0 to 14 years) as at June 2025, which equated to 34.9 per cent of all children in New Zealand.

The number of children in Auckland is projected to stay reasonably constant (from 255,600 children in 1996 to 322,800 in 2048) compared with those aged 65 years and over which is projected to increase considerably (from 108,900 in 1996 to 426,100 in 2048) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Total people in Auckland over time, by age bracket (%)
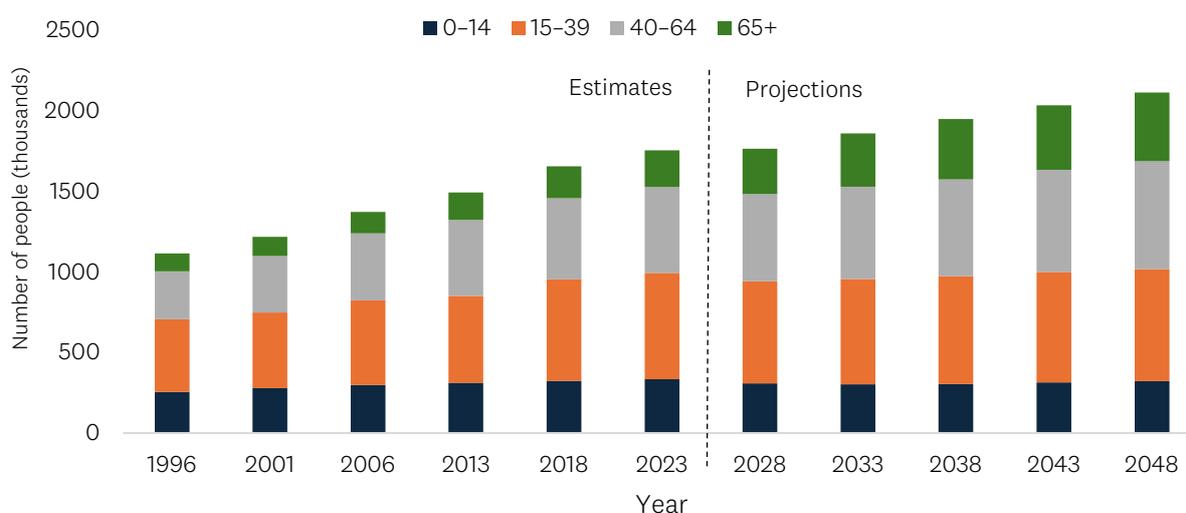
Source: Stats NZ subnational population estimates at 30 June 1996-2025 and Stats NZ subnational population projections, 2023 (base)-2053.

4   Auckland's population is increasingly diverse

Across indicators of diversity such as ethnic group, languages spoken, and birthplace, the degree of diversity in Auckland is increasing. Limited time series data on LGBTIQ+ and disabled communities hinders accurate representation of how these populations are changing within Auckland.

4.1   Gender and sexual identity

The LGBTIQ+ community includes people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, intersex, or have other minority genders or sexual identities.

The 2023 Census was the first census to collect data from New Zealanders about their gender, sexual identity, and whether they have a variation of sex characteristics. At the 2023 Census, 57,324 Auckland residents (4.9%) belonged to the LGBTIQ+ community.

The median age of this group was 31.7 years, compared with 43.9 years among those who were not LGBTIQ+.

The Waitematā local board area had the highest proportion of its adult population who were LGBTIQ+, at 12.0 per cent. Local board areas to the east and south of the Auckland urban area had smaller proportions of their adult population who were LGBTIQ+, ranging between 3.3 and 3.5 per cent.[5]

4.2   Disability

The Stats NZ Household Disability Survey provides official statistics on disability prevalence[6]. In 2023, an estimated 17 per cent of people living in New Zealand households[7] and 14 per cent of people living in a household in the Auckland region were disabled[8]. The Census of Population and Dwellings provides unofficial statistics on disability. In the 2023 Census, 82,872 Auckland residents were categorised as disabled which is an increase of 17,040 people since the 2018 Census[9].

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[5] Howick 3.4%, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu 3.5%, Ōtara-Papatoetoe 3.2%, Manurewa 3.6%, Papakura 3.8% and Franklin 3.3%.

[6] Estimates from the 2023 HDS cannot be compared with estimates from previous disability surveys run by Stats NZ due to changes in the way disabled people were defined. The threshold at which a person was counted as disabled was effectively set higher in 2023 than in previous surveys. See the Household Disability Survey 2023 - findings, definition and design summary for more details: https://www.stats.govt.nz/assets/Reports/Household-Disability-Survey-2023-findings-definitions-and-design-summary/Download-data/household-disability-survey-2023-findings-definitions-and-design-summary.pdf

[7] Note: 'Households' refers to people who live alone or with others in either private dwellings or community-based residential care facilities (these are living arrangements where people are supported to live in the community). The survey did not survey people living in aged-care facilities and long-stay hospitals or in other non-private dwellings (e.g. hotels, university halls, and prisons).

[8] Source: 2023 Household Disability Survey (HDS). A disabled person in this survey is a person with a self-reported (or caregiver-reported for children) long-term difficulty in at least one of the functional domains for their age-group. Where answer options are scaled, the amount of difficulty reported needs to meet a specified threshold.

[9] Source: https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/q1xdcsil/disability-status-activity-limitations-auckland-2023-census-feb-2025.pdf

4.3 Māori descent

In 2023, 13.8 per cent of people in Auckland were of Māori descent[10] compared with 19.6 per cent of people in New Zealand. This proportion has not changed much over time in Auckland with the Census recording 13 per cent in 2013 and 2018.

The distribution of people of Māori descent varies across the region, with Aotea/Great Barrier, Manurewa, and Papakura local board areas recording the highest proportions in 2023, each at 26 per cent. In contrast, Howick and Upper Harbour areas had the smallest proportions at 7 per cent.

4.4 Ethnicity

Between 2001 and 2023, the proportion of Aucklanders identifying with European ethnic groups decreased by 18.7 percentage points, while the proportion identifying with Asian ethnic groups has increased by 17.5 percentage points (see Figure 5). These changes are due to immigration from Asian nations, higher birthrates amongst Asian Aucklanders, alongside declining birthrates of European Aucklanders, and outward internal migration of European Aucklanders. There have been gradual increases in the proportion of both Māori and Pacific Peoples over this time.

Figure 5: Proportion of Auckland residents in each ethnic group, by year (%)
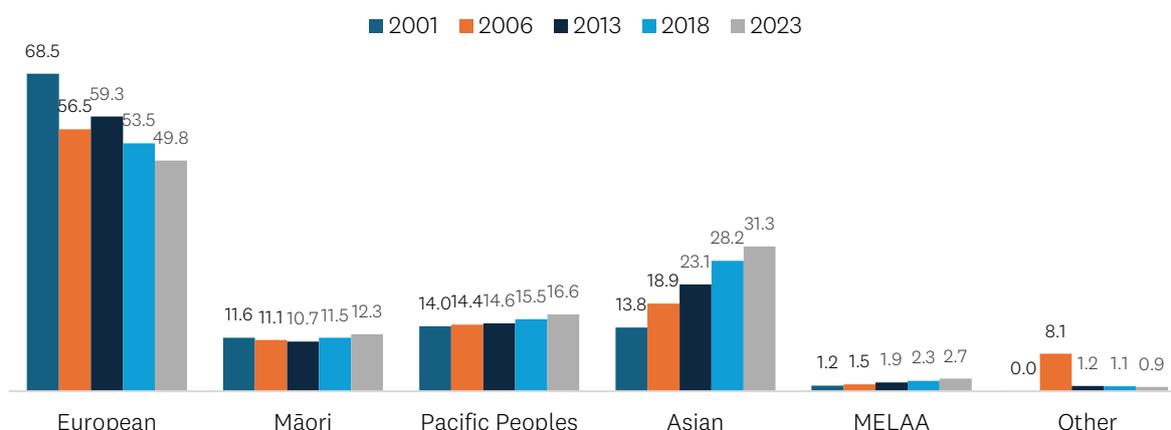
Source: Stats NZ Census of Population and Dwellings.
Notes: People can select more than one ethnic group, so percentages do not add to 100. MELAA stands for Middle Eastern, Latin American and African. In 2006, there was an increase in those who identified with the New Zealander ethnic group which is classified as an 'Other' ethnic group (8.1%). This large proportion in the Other ethnic group offsets the small proportion identified as European (56.5%).

The trend of an increasing proportion of Aucklanders in the broad Asian ethnic group is projected to continue. As Figure 6 shows by 2043, similar numbers of Aucklanders are projected to be of European and Asian ethnicities – 905,500 (45%) European or Other (including New Zealander), and 858,200 (42%) Asian.

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[10] Māori descent is different to Māori ethnicity. Māori descent refers to whether a person is biologically descended from Māori, whereas Māori ethnicity refers to a person's self-perceived cultural affiliation to the Māori ethnic group.

Figure 6: Population projections for Auckland, by ethnic group (counts)
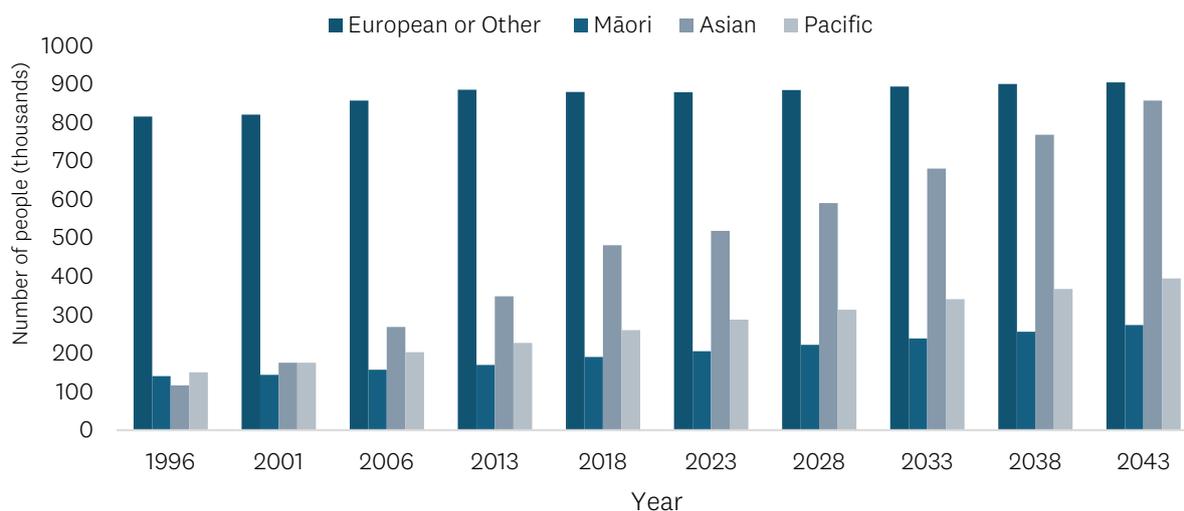
Source: Stats NZ subnational ethnic population projections, 2018 (base)-2048 update published in 2022.

The distribution of ethnic groups varies across the region. At the 2023 Census Māngere-Ōtāhuhu (60.4%), Ōtara-Papatoetoe (48.7%) and Manurewa (39.9%) Local Board Areas had the largest proportions of Pacific Peoples. The Local Board Areas with the greatest proportions of Māori in 2023 were Manurewa (25.2%), Papakura (24.6%) and Aotea/Great Barrier (22.8%). Over half of those in Howick (52.5%) and Puketāpapa (50.5%) identified with an Asian ethnicity, and over 40 per cent of those in Upper Harbour (45.5%) and Whau (42.2%) were Asian. Ōtara-Papatoetoe (35.4%) and Papakura (34.2%) also had notable Asian populations. The largest proportions of European ethnicities were in Aotea/Great Barrier (89.7%), Waiheke (88.0%) and Rodney (84.9%). These three areas also had the smallest proportion of Asian ethnicities (1.7% for Aotea/Great Barrier, 4.6% for Waiheke, and 9.4% for Rodney).

Between 2013 and 2023 the proportion of people of an Asian ethnicity increased by over 20 percentage points in Papakura (21.4 percentage points) and by over 10 percentage points in Upper Harbour (16.1), Howick (13.7), and Hibiscus and Bays (12.2) Local Board Areas. These areas also had the greatest decreases in people identifying with a European ethnic group. Manurewa and Papakura had the greatest increases in Pacific Peoples, with 6.9 and 6.0 percentage point increases respectively.

4.5   Languages spoken

Over a quarter (26.9%) of Aucklanders spoke two languages in 2023, a slight increase on 25.7 per cent in 2018 and 24.4 per cent in 2013. In 2023, 5.2 per cent of Aucklanders spoke three or more languages (5.2% in 2018 and 4.8% in 2013).

The majority (94.0%) of Aucklanders spoke English in 2023. This is a very small decrease from 2018 with 95.1 per cent speaking English and 96 per cent in 2013 (95.6%), 2006 (95.5%) and 2001 (96.2%).

Figure 7 shows languages spoken in Auckland. The proportion speaking Northern Chinese, Panjabi and 'Other' languages has increased notably since 2013.

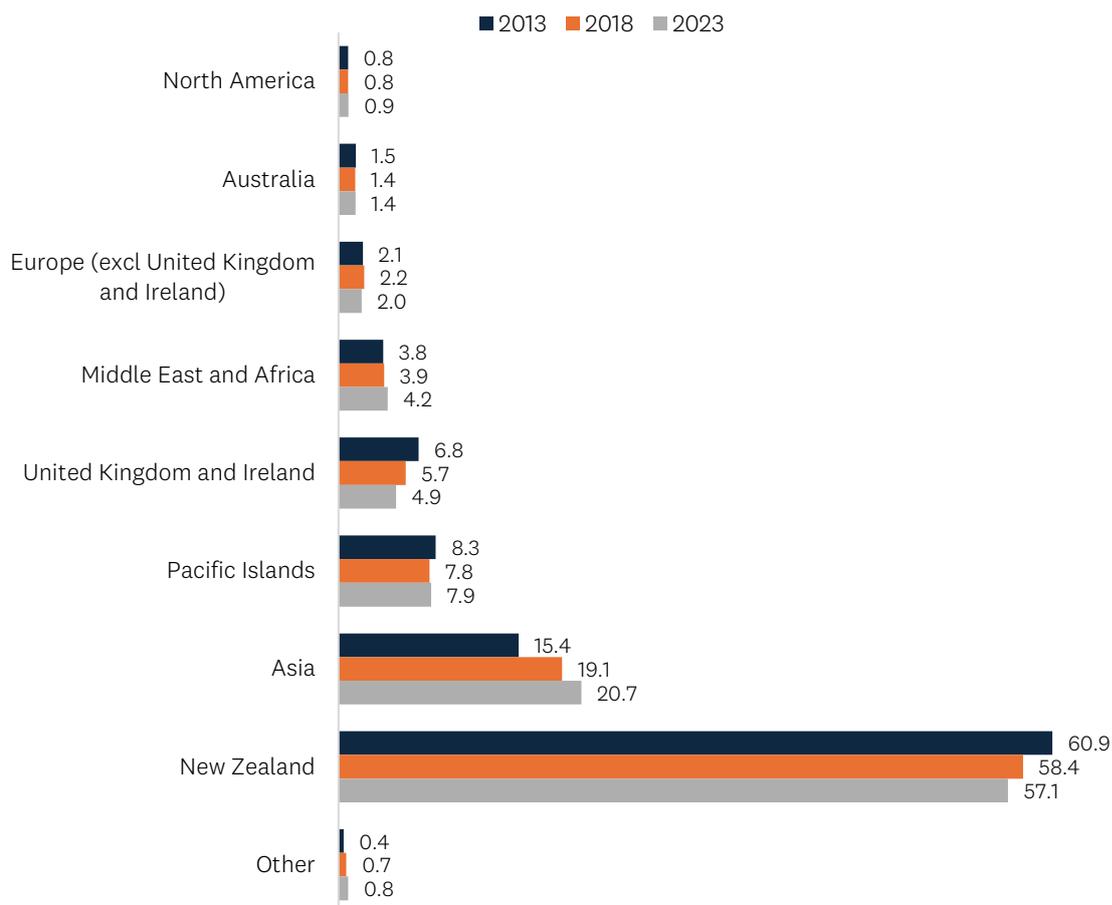Figure 7: Languages spoken in Auckland (excluding English), by year (%)
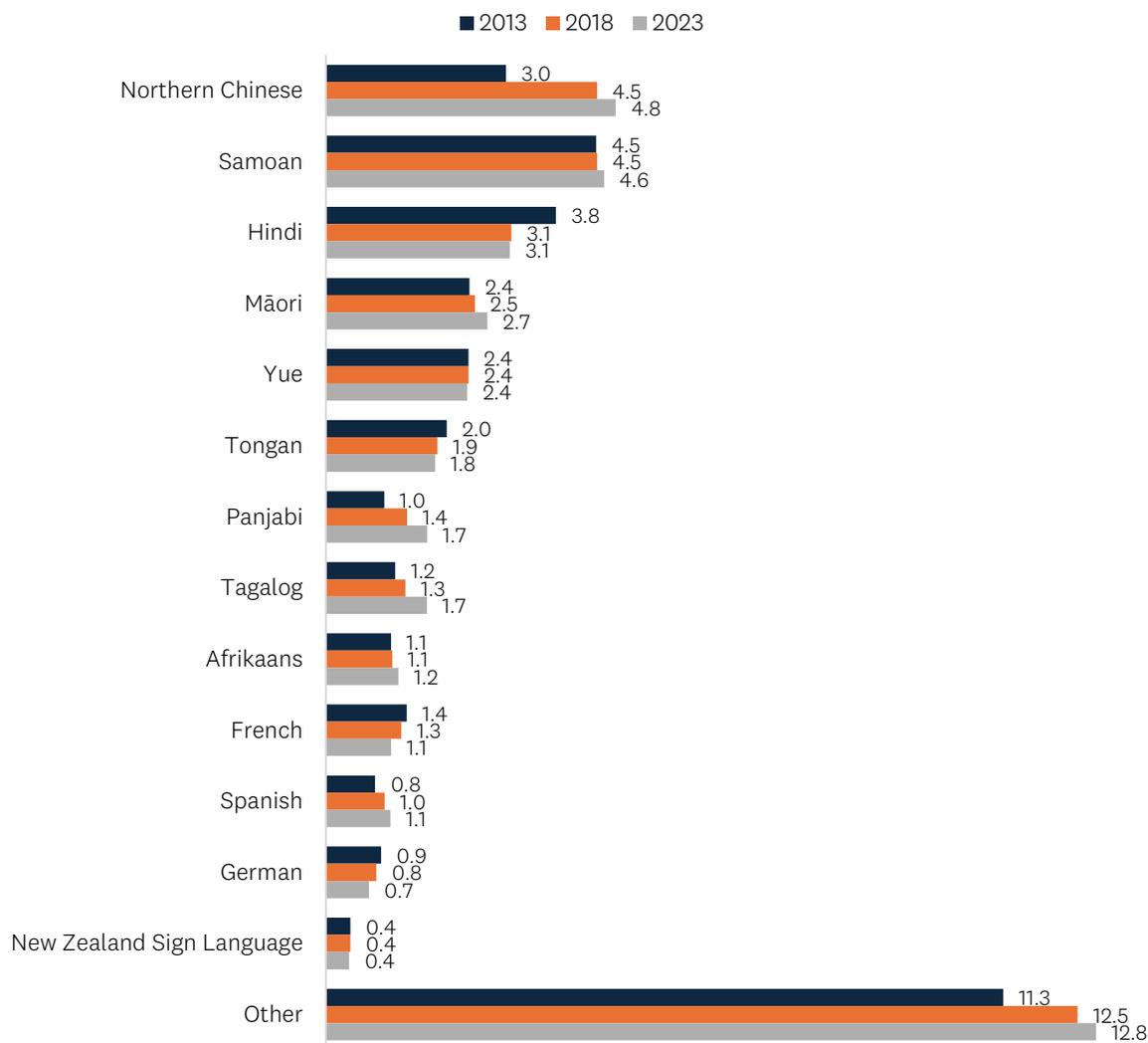
Source: Stats NZ Census of Population and Dwellings

4.6   Place of birth

The proportion of Aucklanders born overseas increased from 39 per cent in 2013 to 43 per cent in 2023.

Increasing proportions of people in Auckland were born in Asia – from 15.4 per cent in 2013 to 20.7 per cent in 2023 (see Figure 8). Across the last three censuses, the largest numbers of Asian-born Aucklanders have consistently come from the Philippines, China, and India. While the mix of Asian countries people come from has stayed mostly the same over time, there are a few noticeable changes. More people from the Philippines are now living in Auckland – rising from 9.2 per cent of the Asian-born population in 2013 to 13.0 per cent in 2023. Meanwhile, the proportion of Korean-born residents has decreased from 9.6 per cent in 2013 to 6.5 per cent in 2023.
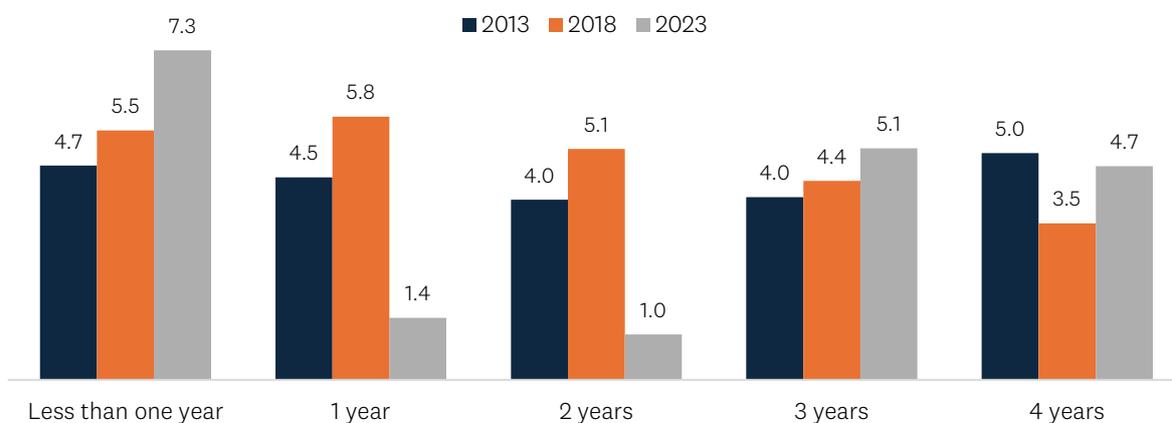
Figure 8: Birthplace (broad world region), by year, 2023 (%)

■ 2013 ■ 2018 ■ 2023

Region	2013	2018	2023
North America	0.8	0.8	0.9
Australia	1.5	1.4	1.4
Europe (excl United Kingdom and Ireland)	2.1	2.2	2.0
Middle East and Africa	3.8	3.9	4.2
United Kingdom and Ireland	6.8	5.7	4.9
Pacific Islands	8.3	7.8	7.9
Asia	15.4	19.1	20.7
New Zealand	60.9	58.4	57.1
Other	0.4	0.7	0.8

Source: Stats NZ Census of Population and Dwellings

During the intercensal period between 2018 and 2023, immigration to New Zealand was impacted by border closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the proportion of people in Auckland who stated they had arrived from overseas 1 or 2 years prior when the 2023 Census was undertaken are smaller compared with 2018 or 2013.

Figure 9: Years since arrival in New Zealand for total overseas born, by year (%)

■ 2013 ■ 2018 ■ 2023

Years since arrival	2013	2018	2023
Less than one year	4.7	5.5	7.3
1 year	4.5	5.8	1.4
2 years	4.0	5.1	1.0
3 years	4.0	4.4	5.1
4 years	5.0	3.5	4.7

Source: Stats NZ Census of Population and Dwellings

5   Socioeconomic disparities

In this section we explore several socioeconomic indicators and trace broad differences across Auckland.

5.1   NZ Dep Index

The New Zealand Index of Socioeconomic Deprivation (NZDep) is a small area measure of socioeconomic deprivation. It is created by the University of Otago from census variables across eight dimensions: communication, income, employment, qualifications, home ownership, support, living space, and dwelling condition. It is a relative measure that ranks areas in New Zealand from 1 (least deprived) to 10 (most deprived).

Figure 10 shows that, in 2023, Auckland had a higher proportion of areas rated decile 10 (most deprived) and a smaller proportion of areas rated decile 1 (least deprived) compared to New Zealand overall.

Figure 10: Proportion of Auckland population living in each decile, 2023 (%)
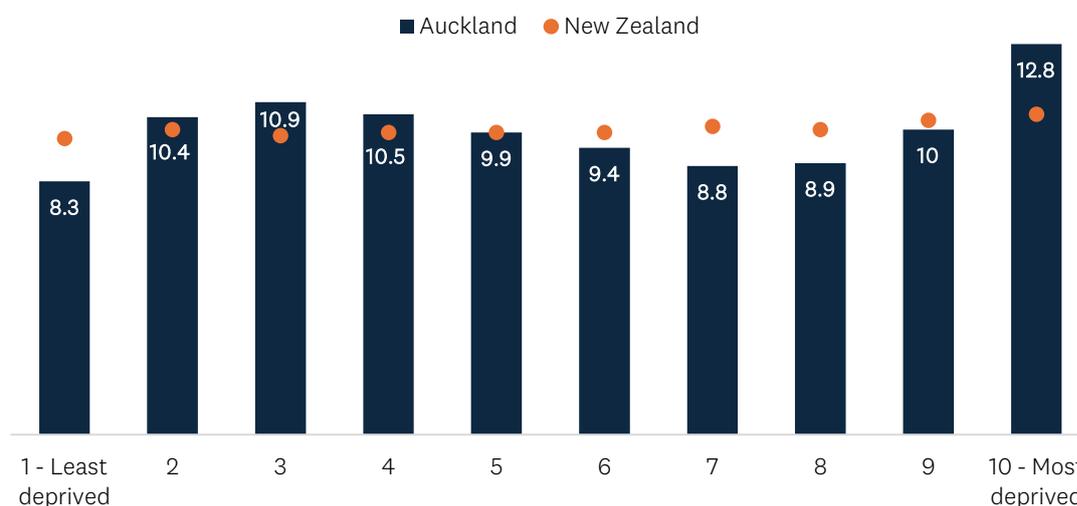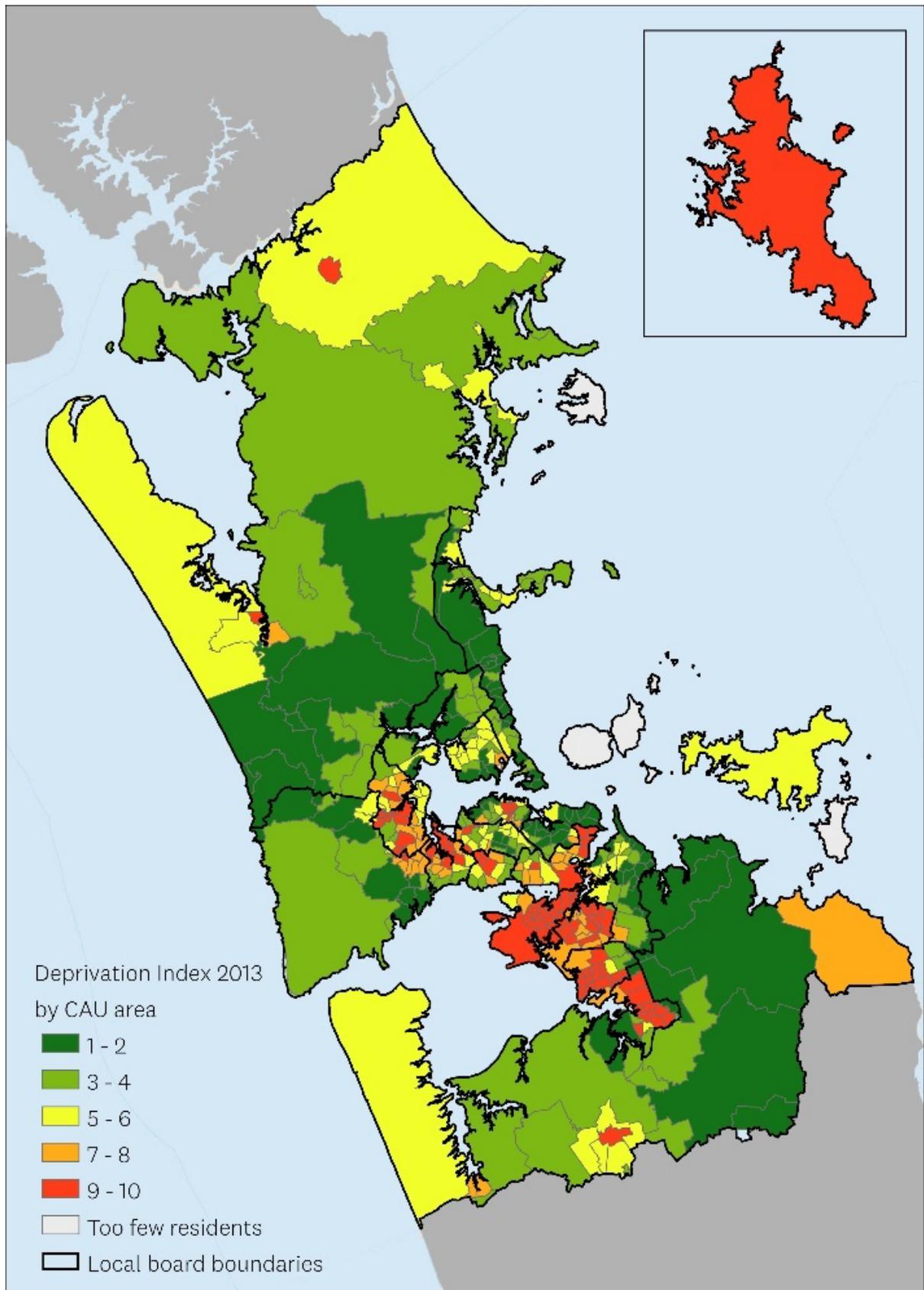

Source: Stats NZ Census of Population and Dwellings. Created by University of Otago using Census variables. Note: The Dep Index is standardised so that each decile represents approximately 10 per cent of the New Zealand population – this is why national proportions of each decile are flat and consistent over time.

Figure 11 shows maps of Auckland with the decile score for each SA2 area[11]. This shows that areas in southern and western urban Auckland include some of the most deprived areas (red and orange). The least deprived areas are in northern urban and rural areas, central-eastern urban areas, and some areas in rural southern Auckland (green).

This spatial distribution of deprivation has been mostly consistent over time, but there have been some changes as the following maps from 2013 and 2023 illustrate.
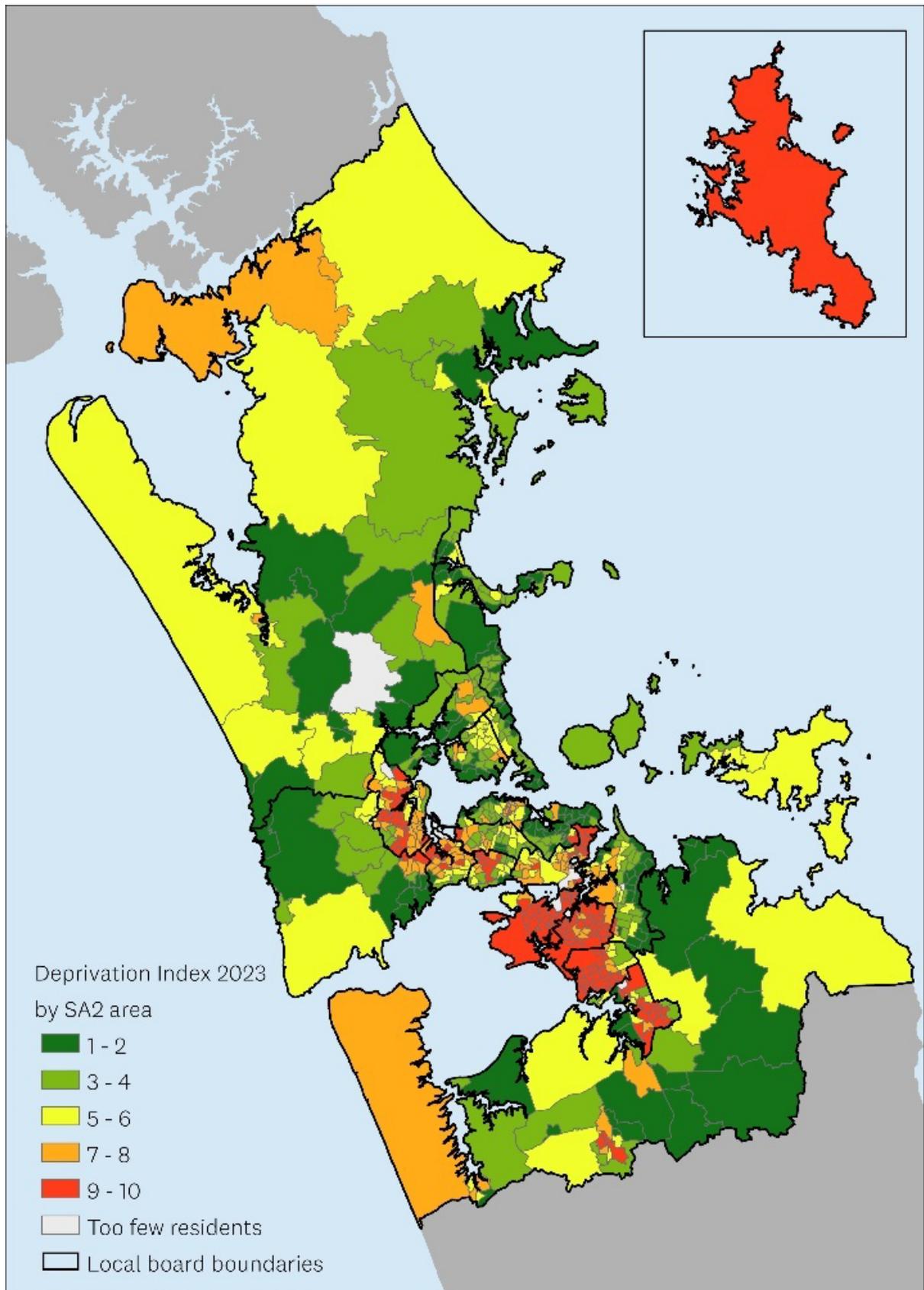
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[11] Statistical Area 2 (SA2) area geography was introduced by Stats NZ in 2018. The map for 2013 uses the precursor Census Area Unit (CAU) geographic areas.

Figure 11: Map of Auckland region showing deprivation index by SA2 area for 2013

Deprivation Index 2013
by CAU area

- 1 - 2
- 3 - 4
- 5 - 6
- 7 - 8
- 9 - 10
- Too few residents
- Local board boundaries

Source: Stats NZ Census of Population and Dwellings. Map created by Social and Economic Research and Evaluation team, Auckland Council.

Figure 12: Map of Auckland region showing deprivation index by SA2 area for 2023

Deprivation Index 2023
by SA2 area

- 1 - 2
- 3 - 4
- 5 - 6
- 7 - 8
- 9 - 10
- Too few residents
- Local board boundaries

Source: Stats NZ Census of Population and Dwellings. Map created by Social and Economic Research and Evaluation team, Auckland Council.

5.2   Home ownership

The proportion of households in Auckland who own their home has steadily decreased over time. In 2023, 59.5 per cent of Auckland households in private occupied dwellings in Auckland owned the dwelling they lived in (with or without a mortgage) or held it in a family trust, down from 73.9 per cent in 1986 (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Proportion of households living in a dwelling owned or partly owned by usual resident(s) or held in a family trust, by census year for Auckland (%)
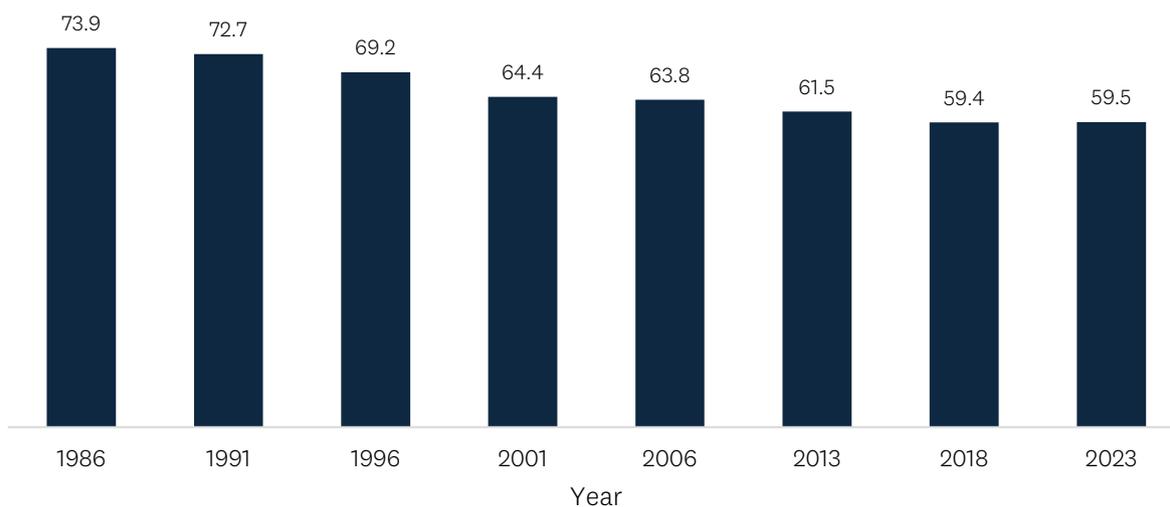

Source: Stats NZ Census of Population and Dwellings.

Levels of home ownership vary by local board area. For example, between 2013 and 2023 Waitematā has had the lowest rates of home ownership, between 39 to 40 per cent. The amount of short-term and tertiary student accommodation in the city centre within Waitematā may help to explain low home ownership rates. The local board areas of Maungakiekie-Tāmaki, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe and Manurewa have some of the lowest rates of home ownership outside of the city centre (Waitematā), ranging from 41 to 55 per cent. In contrast, rural local board areas such as Rodney and Franklin, and semi-rural local board areas (e.g. Hibiscus and Bays and Waitākere Ranges) have the highest rates of home ownership between 72 to 75 per cent in 2023.

The average number of people in a household in Auckland has been stable at three people since the 1980s. However, the average household size has varied across the region. Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe and Manurewa local board areas had the largest average household sizes in 2013, 2018, and 2023 (ranging from 3.6 to 4.0 people), while Aotea/Great Barrier, Waiheke and Waitematā have consistently had the smallest average household sizes over this time (ranging from 2.0 to 2.3 people). Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe and Manurewa had the largest proportion of households with six or more usual residents (ranging from 16% to 23% of households). Aotea/Great Barrier, Waiheke and Waitematā have had the largest proportion of one-person households (ranging from 42% to 30% of households).

5.3   Employment

The proportion of the Auckland working age population[12] in the labour force has increased over time from 67 per cent in 1996 to 73 per cent in 2025 (see Figure 14). This increase has a corresponding decrease in the proportion of Aucklanders not in the labour force (such as those retired, with personal or family responsibility (e.g. unpaid housework or childcare), in education, unable to work due to disability or sickness, and in other situations in which they are not seeking employment[13]). The proportion of people unemployed is cyclical in response to changes in global economic markets.

Figure 14: Labour force status and labour force participation rate for Auckland (aged 15 years and over), by year end March (%)
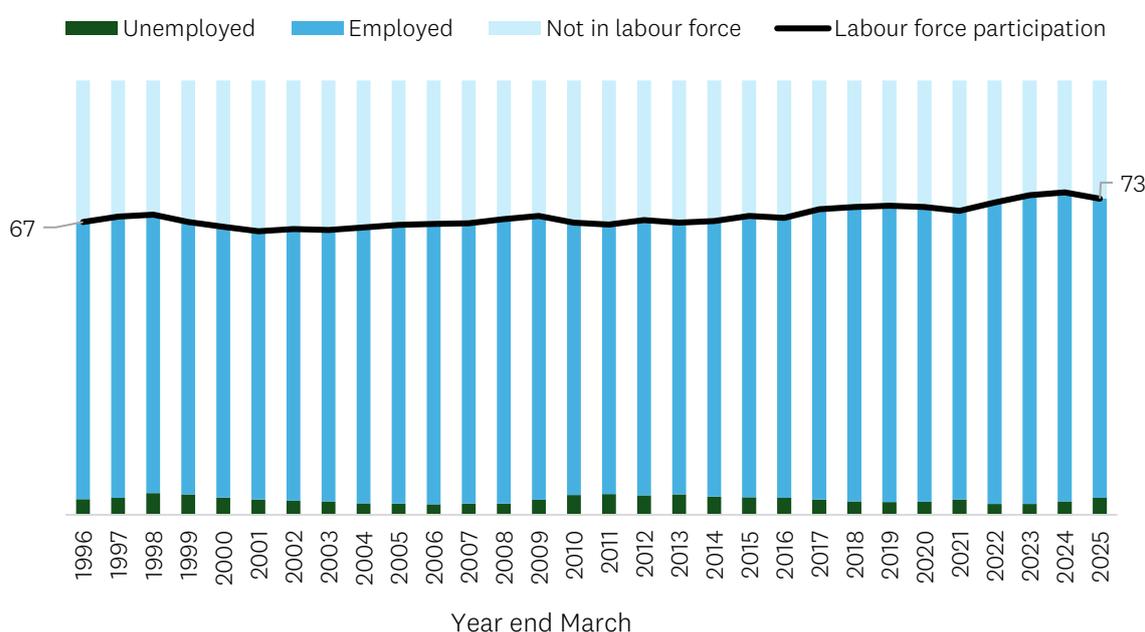
Source: Stats NZ Household Labour Force Survey, March 2025.
Note: Unemployed is shown as the proportion of the working age population. This is different to 'unemployment rate' which is the proportion unemployed based on the total employed and unemployed (i.e. excludes those not in the labour force).

Several factors contributed to the increase in labour force participation including an increased proportion of people aged 55 years and over (indicating later retirement ages) and an increased proportion of females. The labour force participation rate for people aged 55 years and over increased from 26 per cent in 1995 to 51 per cent in 2025 – an increase of 25 percentage points. Between 1996 and 2025 the difference in labour force participation rate between males and females reduced due to an increase in the proportion of females participating in the labour force. In 1996, the labour force participation rate for males was 77 per cent and 59 per cent for females – a difference of 18 percentage points. In 2025, the

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[12] Defined as those 15 years and older.
[13] Source: https://www.stats.govt.nz/assets/Methods/Household-Labour-Force-Survey-sources-and-methods-2025/household-labour-force-survey-sources-and-methods-2025.pdf

participation rate for males was 78 per cent and 68 for females – a difference of 10 percentage points, and a reduction of 8 percentage points since 1996.

Some southern local board areas (e.g. Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe and Manurewa) have had consistently lower labour force participation rates compared with Auckland overall. However, there has been a notable increase in the labour force participation rate in Papakura from 69 per cent in March 2022 to 79 per cent in March 2025.

Central local board areas such as Waitematā, Albert-Eden and Ōrākei, as well as Kaipātiki have had steady increases over time and are key areas contributing to the total upward trend.

5.4   Income

The median real household income for Auckland has increased from $77,570 in 1996 to $116,800 in 2023 (see Figure 15). From 2006, the local board areas with the lowest and highest median household income have been consistent. Aotea/Great Barrier has had the lowest median household income and Ōrākei has had the highest median household income. The difference in median household income between these areas increased from $79,488 in 2001 to $110,375 in 2018.

Figure 15: Median real household income ($) for Auckland region, by year
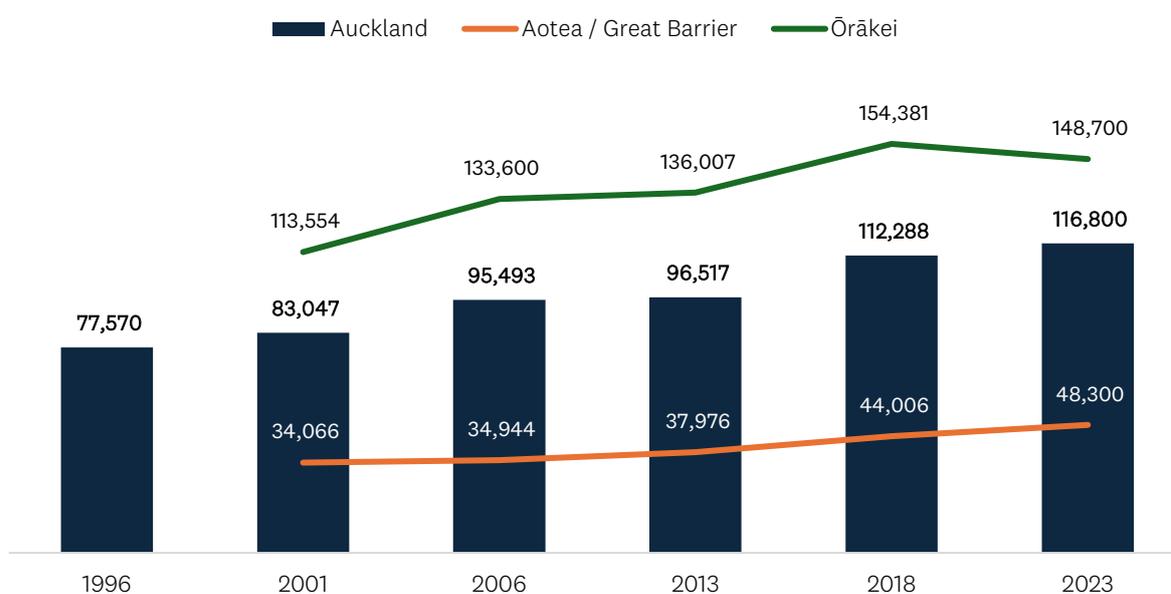

Source: Stats NZ Census of Population and Dwellings.

Note: 'Real household income' is adjusted for account for inflation by standardising with the CPI index. No local board area level data available for 1996.

The biennial Quality of Life survey asks about perceptions of having 'enough' money to meet everyday needs. The proportion of Aucklanders who reported having 'enough' or 'more than enough' money to meet their everyday needs has been similar between 2010 and 2022 ranging between 37 and 48 per cent. In 2024, this proportion dropped to 33 per cent and the proportion reporting having 'just enough money' increased to 43 per cent (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Residents' perception that their income meets everyday needs, by year
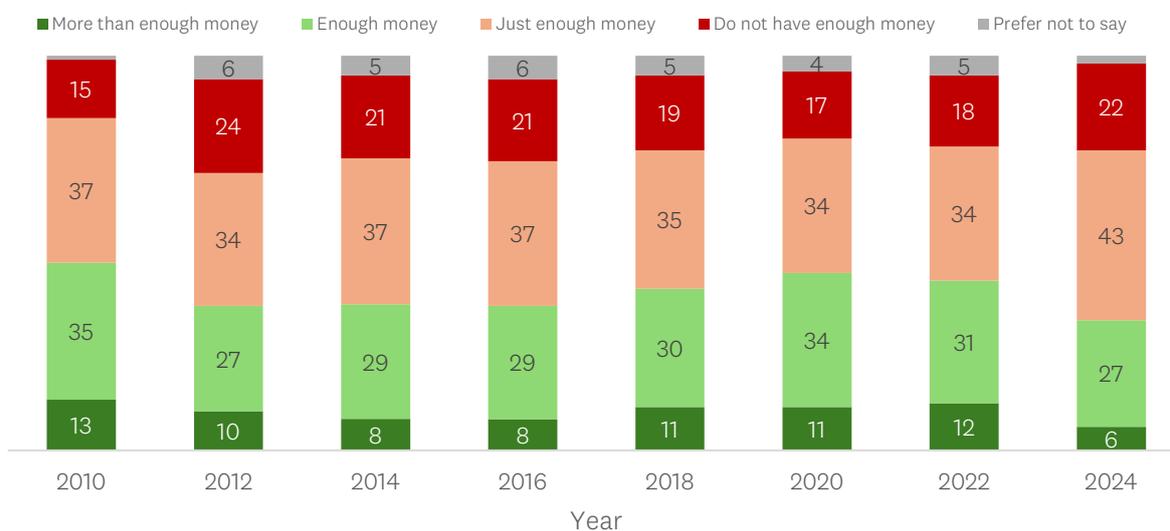
Source: Quality of Life Survey, Auckland results only

5.5   Youth not in education, employment or training (NEET)

The Stats NZ Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) collects data on people aged 15-24 years who are neither working nor enrolled in any education or training programmes (NEET). Youth NEET is a key indicator of youth wellbeing and economic inclusion.

For the year ending March 2025, the average youth NEET rate for Auckland was 14.0 per cent, meaning that 14.0 per cent of those aged 15-24 years were not in education, employment or training. Between 2006 and 2025 the average youth NEET rate for Auckland has ranged between 10.1 and 14.0 per cent and, as Figure 17 shows, youth NEET rate has risen and fallen over this time.

Youth NEET rate varies across ethnic groups. The NEET rate for Māori and Pacific has been consistently higher than European or Asian by approximately 10 percentage points. In March 2025 the NEET rate for Māori was 23.1 per cent and 20.2 per cent for Pacific, compared with 10.4 per cent for European and 10.9 for Asian.

Figure 17: NEET rate (rolling annual average) for Auckland, by ethnic group, 2006-2025 (%)
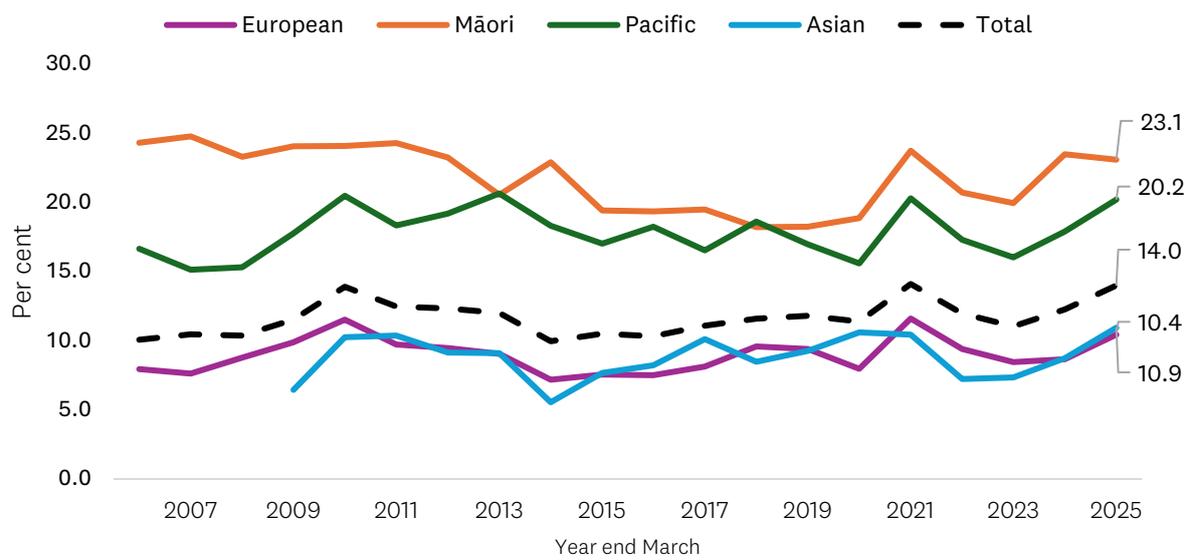
Source: Stats NZ Household Labour Force Survey.

The youth NEET rate varies across local board areas. The Papakura Local Board Area has consistently had one of the highest youth NEET rates. Since 2005, the youth NEET rate for Papakura has been above 20 per cent and ranged between 20 and 27 per cent[14]. Māngere-Ōtāhuhu and Manurewa have also consistently had higher youth NEET rates compared with other Local Board Areas that ranged between 15 and 22 percent. Hibiscus and Bays, Waitematā, Albert-Eden and Howick, in contrast, have had consistently lower rates of youth NEET ranging between 8 and 13 per cent.

These geographical variations in youth NEET correspond with ethnic group differences. Local Board Areas to the south of the urban area have relatively larger proportions of Pacific ethnic groups and Māori compared to other areas. Central, eastern and northern areas have greater proportions of European and Asian ethnic groups.

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[14] Small sample sizes in the HLFS can cause the results for some quarters to be inconsistent with broader trends. These 'outlier' values have been excluded from the ranges provided.

6 Concluding thoughts

This paper broadly traces four interconnected demographic and social shifts shaping Auckland: sustained population growth, population ageing, increasing cultural diversity, and socioeconomic disparities.

These shifts are not occurring evenly, with clear geographic variations across local board areas, reflecting differences in housing development, age structures and ethnic group distributions. The same areas experiencing growth and diversification are often those facing significant socioeconomic challenges, including higher youth NEET rates and lower home ownership levels.

The interplay between these factors underscores the complexity of planning for a city like Auckland, which, as New Zealand's primate city, differs significantly from other New Zealand centres, yet shares many characteristics with cities internationally. It is important to consider the cumulative and compounding nature of these demographic changes – particularly how population dynamics, cultural shifts, and inequalities intersect spatially and socially – when shaping long-term strategies for equitable growth, inclusive urban development, and focused community development initiatives.

6.1 Additional resources

2023 Census results for Auckland: https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/publications/2023-census-results-for-auckland-summary-reports/

Stats NZ profiles for Auckland and local board areas: https://tools.summaries.stats.govt.nz/