

Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) in Auckland

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Executive summary

Introduction

Young adults who are not in employment, education and training (NEET) are at risk of becoming socially excluded with income below the poverty line and lacking the skills to improve their economic situation (OECD, 2017).

Working together to address the issue of NEET youth has become a key focus of national and local government programmes and policies in many countries, including New Zealand. The Auckland Plan 2050 sets a clear direction for increased and targeted education, training and skill development in order to ensure that Auckland is prosperous with many opportunities and delivers a better standard of living for everyone (Auckland Council, 2018).

This report uses publicly available data from Statistics New Zealand Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) to provide an overview of young people aged 15 to 24 years in Auckland who are NEET. The report identifies groups (by age, ethnicity, and location) who are particularly affected, and the extent to which rates have changed over time.

Measuring NEET

Statistics New Zealand adopts the international definition of youth NEET as young people aged 15 to 24 years who are unemployed and not engaged in education or training, and not in the labour force (NILF), and not engaged in education or training (further broken down as those providing caregiving and those not providing caregiving).

NEET statistics are available as the number of NEET youth as well as the NEET rate. The NEET rate is the total number of NEET youth as a proportion of the total youth population. Both are discussed in this report.

Findings

In the year to June 2018:

- there were 29,400 NEET youth living in Auckland (38% of the national total)
- the majority of NEET youth (20,600 or 70%) in Auckland were aged 20-24 years
- Europeans represent the largest number of NEET youth in Auckland (13,100) but this group had the second lowest NEET rate (10%), alongside Asian young people (rate of 10% also)
- the highest rate was among young Pacific people (8900 people or 18%)
- the NEET rate among young Māori was similar, at 17 per cent
- over a third (10,800 or 37%) of Auckland's youth NEET lived in the Southern Initiative area.

Analysis of trends over time confirms that the economic slowdown experienced in 2008 and 2009 adversely affected young people more than other age groups. For example, the number of NEET youth in Auckland increased from 20,900 in December 2006 to the peak of 31,800 in December 2009 (an increase of 52%). The rest of New Zealand also saw a substantial increase.

Young Pacific people in particular appear to have been affected with a substantial increase in the NEET rate from 14 per cent at December 2007 to 21 per cent at December 2009.

Caregiving

This report also discusses caregiving as a contributor to NEET youth at the national level (sub-sample sizes are too small for robust analysis at the Auckland level). In the year to June 2018, there were 77,900 youth NEET in New Zealand. Of this group, 18 per cent were not in the labour force (and not in education), but were providing caregiving services.

Over the period from June 2005 to June 2018 there was a notable decline in the numbers of NEET youth who were not in the labour force (so not officially unemployed) but were providing caregiving (40% decline or 9100). This compares to an increase of 62 per cent in NEET youth who were not in the labour force and also not providing caregiving, and a 47 per cent increase in the remaining NEET category – those who were in the labour force, but unemployed.

Conclusion

While NEET data is useful and fills an important gap in our understanding of NEET youth in Auckland, NEET statistics do not provide the stories behind these young people; their diverse life experiences, their problems and difficulties, needs, challenges, aspirations or distinct choices made. Work to look into this for NEET youth in Auckland will be useful and adds value to our understanding of this group as presented in this report. This holistic approach to understanding NEET youth would be important for central and local government in developing policies aimed at reducing the number of our young people who are at risk of becoming disadvantaged or marginalised in the future.

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1 Introduction

Young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) represent significant non-utilised youth labour potential, and are also seen as a cohort at risk of becoming disadvantaged or marginalised in the future. Periods of unemployment early in a person's working life are associated with a higher likelihood of unemployment and increased risk of social exclusion later in life, referred to as the 'scarring effect' (International Labour Organisation, 2017; Scarpetta, et al., 2010; Maloney, 2004). As a result, young people's disengagement and underutilisation in the labour market may incur lasting costs to the economy, to society, to the individual, and to their families (Statistics New Zealand, 2011 and International Labour Organisation, 2010).¹

Working together to address the issue of NEET youth has become a focus of national and local government programmes and policies in many countries, including New Zealand. Youth NEET rates are now an official statistic in New Zealand, and are described as an indicator of youth disengagement (MBIE, 2018).

Auckland Council is actively engaged in addressing the issue of youth NEET through a range of initiatives such as the Youth Connections programme, which includes Job Fest youth employment events, youth employer pledges and community youth employment initiatives. Another avenue is through work being undertaken by the Southern Initiative (TSI) to explore, create and test radical solutions to some of South Auckland's most pressing social and economic challenges.² At a strategic level, the Auckland Plan 2050 sets a clear direction for increased and targeted education, training and skill development in order to ensure that Auckland is prosperous with many opportunities and delivers a better standard of living for everyone (Auckland Council, 2018).

1.1 Definition of youth NEET

Since 2011, Statistics New Zealand has published data on youth NEET as part of their official statistics series (Statistics New Zealand, 2011).

¹ For example; it is estimated that the direct economic loss due to the high proportion of youth NEET across the European Union was 153 billion euros (International Labour Organisation, 2017) and in New Zealand, the short-term (one to three years) economic cost of youth disengagement was estimated to cost per capita of \$21,996 and for Auckland \$23,661 (Pacheco & Dye, 2014).

² To read more about Youth Connections refer to <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/grants-community-support-housing/pages/youth-connections.aspx>.

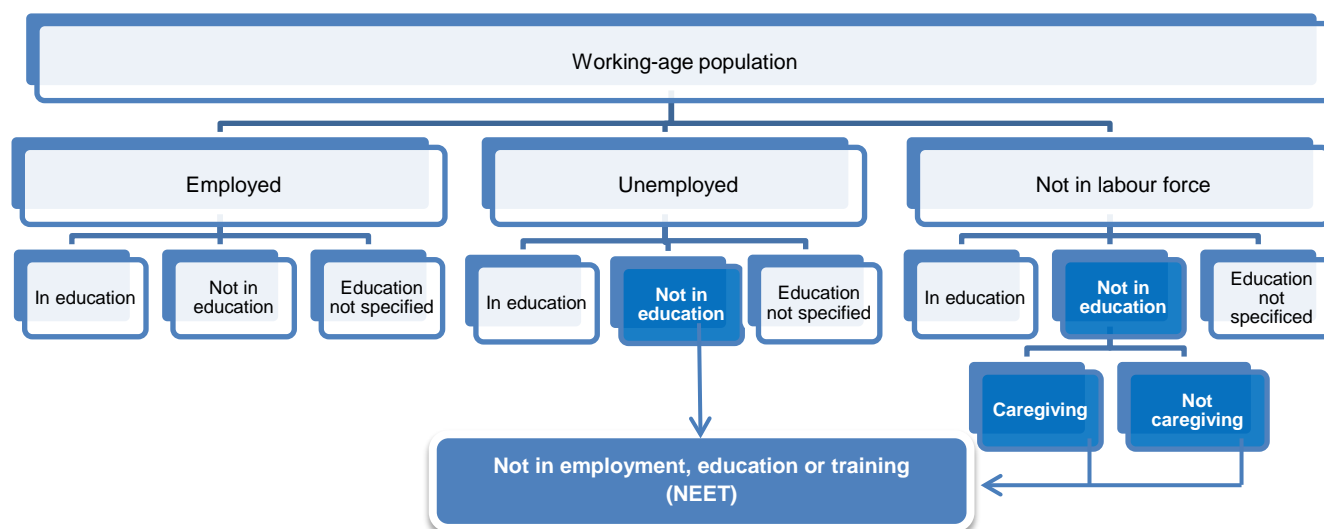
The Southern Initiative (TSI) is a major place-based regeneration project in south Auckland. It covers the four local board areas of Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Manurewa, and Papakura. To find out more about the work being undertaken by the TSI read here: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/place-based-plans/docsnewsletters/tsi-review-2017.pdf>

Statistics New Zealand adopts the international definition of youth NEET as young people aged 15 to 24 years who are:

- unemployed and not engaged in education or training, or
- not in the labour force (NILF), and not engaged in education or training.

This is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Who count as not in employment, education or training (NEET)



Note: Working age population is defined as those aged 15 and over, but in this diagram, it refers to those aged 15 to 24.

Source: Statistics NZ (2011).

The NEET measure for youth is designed to capture the extent to which young people are disengaged from both the labour market and the education system. It offers greater insight into the situation of youth engagement than the traditional unemployment measure (although this is still of use and interest).

1.2 Data source

The first official NEET series for New Zealand was released in December 2011 with data available for each quarter dating back to March 2004. It is taken from the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS). The HLFS produces regular quarterly estimates of the NEET rate and population at national and regional levels, and allows analysis of their demographic, educational, and labour market characteristics.³

³ For information on the HLFS refer Statistics NZ website:

http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/income-and-work/employment_and_unemployment/hlfs-sources-methods-2015.aspx

The HLFS is a point-in-time estimate that shows whether people were NEET at the time they were surveyed. It does not show the duration of when these young people were NEET, whether they have had recurring phases of being NEET or the reasons why they are NEET. For example, some young people may choose not to be in the labour force due to reasons such as looking after children or relatives, travelling, volunteering, or completing internships. Some may have limited control over being in the labour force due to reasons such as a lack of jobs, living with long-term disabilities or suffering from long-term sickness, poor qualifications, substance abuse, or criminal offences (International Labour Organisation, 2018). Given these limitations the use and interpretation of NEET statistics should be treated with care.

Because the HLFS is a sample survey, all statistics are subject to survey sampling error. Statistics presented here at the sub-sample (e.g. location) and sub-variable (e.g. ethnicity) levels are also subject to additional sampling errors and should be treated as indicative only.

NEET data is also subject to seasonal influences, for example NEET rates tend to be higher in the March quarter and lower in September. To ensure information is seasonally aligned, rolling annual averages are used throughout this report. This is the average of the four consecutive quarters including the current one. In this report, the moving annual average to June 2018⁴ is reported on as well as time series data for the period year ended December 2004 to year end June 2018.

Information for NEET youth at the regional level is available split by age, by ethnicity, and by age and ethnicity combined, but not by gender. It is also available by local board (including the Southern Initiative area), but is indicative only due to very small sub-sample sizes. Where data is not available at the Auckland regional level, New Zealand data is discussed.

Both NEET numbers and NEET rates are discussed in this report. The NEET rate is the total number of NEET youth as a proportion of the total youth population.

1.3 This report

This report brings together NEET statistics for young people aged 15 to 24 years in Auckland. The report identifies groups (by age, ethnicity, and location) who are particularly affected, and the extent to which rates and trends change over time.

⁴ The moving annual average for June 2018 is the average of the four quarters ending with June 2018.

Particular focus is provided on comparative trends in NEET across age (that is, teenagers aged 15 to 19 years, and young adults aged 20 to 24 years) and ethnic groups in Auckland, but it also includes comparison of Auckland to the rest of New Zealand and variations by location within the region.

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 is a snapshot as at year ended June 2018. It starts by describing NEET youth in Auckland, New Zealand and the TSI area. This is followed by looking at NEET youth across the two age groups; 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 years, and for the four main ethnic groups in Auckland; European, Māori, Pacific people and Asian. The location of NEET youth by local board area in Auckland is also provided.
- Section 3 looks at the long-term trends in NEET youth and NEET rates from year ended December 2004 to June 2018, by region, age group and ethnicity.
- Section 4 examines the significance of caregiving as a contributor to youth NEET for different gender and age groups in New Zealand (Auckland level data is not available at this detail).

2 Overview of youth NEET as at June 2018

This section provides a high-level snapshot of young people aged 15 to 24 years not in employment, education or training in Auckland in the year to June 2018. The numbers of NEET youth is provided as well as the proportion of NEET youth to the total youth population in Auckland, the NEET rates. National youth NEET figures and rates are also provided for comparison.

To further understand youth NEET in Auckland, this section also examines some of the characteristics of this group of young people: their age; their ethnicity; and where they live.

2.1 Youth NEET by area

In the year to June 2018, there were 29,400 NEET youth in Auckland, representing over a third (38%) of all youth NEET in New Zealand. This proportion is similar to Auckland's share of the total youth population.

Over one in 10 (12%) of all 15 to 24 year olds in Auckland were NEET (similar to the national proportion).

Table 1: Youth NEET numbers and NEET rates (%) for Auckland, New Zealand and The Southern Initiative area, annual average June 2018

	NEET numbers	NEET rate (%)
The Southern Initiative	10,800	19.2
Rest of Auckland	18,600	9.5
Auckland total	29,400	11.6
Rest of New Zealand	48,500	11.6
New Zealand total	77,900	11.6

As Table 1 also shows, in the year to June 2018, 10,800 young people living in the TSI area were NEET – 19.2 per cent of all young people living in this area. This rate is considerably higher than the rate for the rest of Auckland, at 9.5 per cent. Whereas over one in five (22% or 56,500) of all youth in Auckland lived in the TSI area, over one in three (37%) NEET youth in the region were from this area. This translates into a NEET rate of 19.2 per cent for TSI.

The higher NEET rate in the TSI area could be associated with the relatively high proportions of Māori and Pacific youth living in the area. These groups tend to have a higher NEET rate than other ethnicities (refer to Section 2.3).

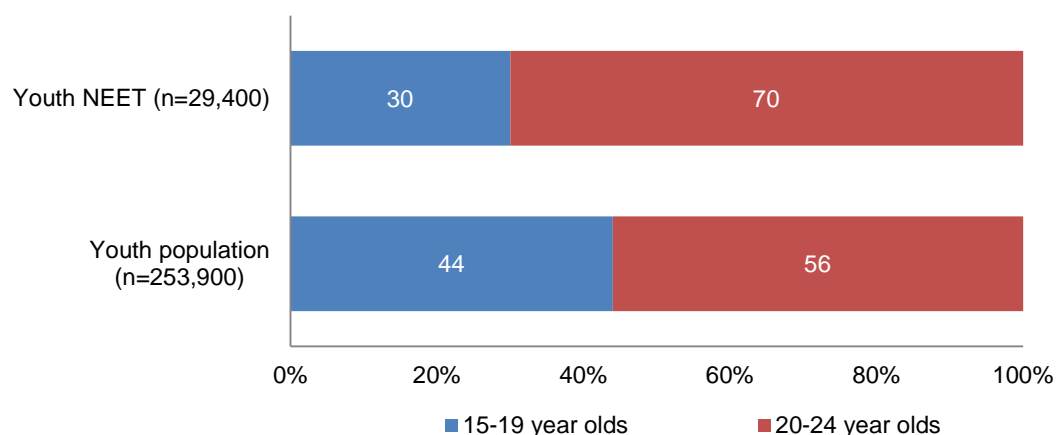
The reason for the higher NEET rate in the TSI area is largely outside the scope of this report, but may relate to a lack of connection between local employers and young people in South Auckland. Research lead by the Auckland Co-design Lab (the Lab) in collaboration with overall Lab sponsor, Auckland Council's Southern Initiative, finds that there is an attitude gap between employers and young people, and also a complex clash of norms and expectations, which could be overcome through greater preparedness and proximity between different groups involved (Auckland Co-design Lab, 2016).

2.2 Youth NEET by age group

There are large differences in the numbers and percentage of young people who are NEET when we look at the two age groups that make up this group – those aged 15 to 19 and those aged 20 to 24.

The majority of NEET youth in Auckland were aged 20 to 24 with 20,600 recorded (representing 70% of total NEET in the year to June 2018). The younger age group (aged 15 to 19) had 8800 NEET over the same period (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Share of youth NEET and youth population by age group in Auckland, annual average June 2018



This means that 14 per cent of all 20 to 24 year olds in Auckland were NEET, a much higher proportion than the younger age group (8%) and total youth overall (12%). The lower proportion of youth NEET aged 15 to 19 year olds could be partly explained by a higher proportion of this age group who are likely to still be in formal education.⁵

⁵ Schooling in New Zealand is compulsory from age 6 to 16. Source: Ministry of Education. <http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/our-role-and-our-people/education-in-nz/>. Accessed 11/07/2018.

2.3 Youth NEET by ethnicity

There are substantial differences in the rates of young people who are NEET across the four main ethnic groups in Auckland, namely, European, Māori, Pacific people and Asian.⁶

As Figure 3 shows, the largest numbers of youth NEET were European – 13,100 young people, representing 45 per cent of total NEET in the year to June 2018. This ethnic group are the largest proportion of the total youth population in Auckland (52%), but they have a relatively low NEET rate of 10 per cent.

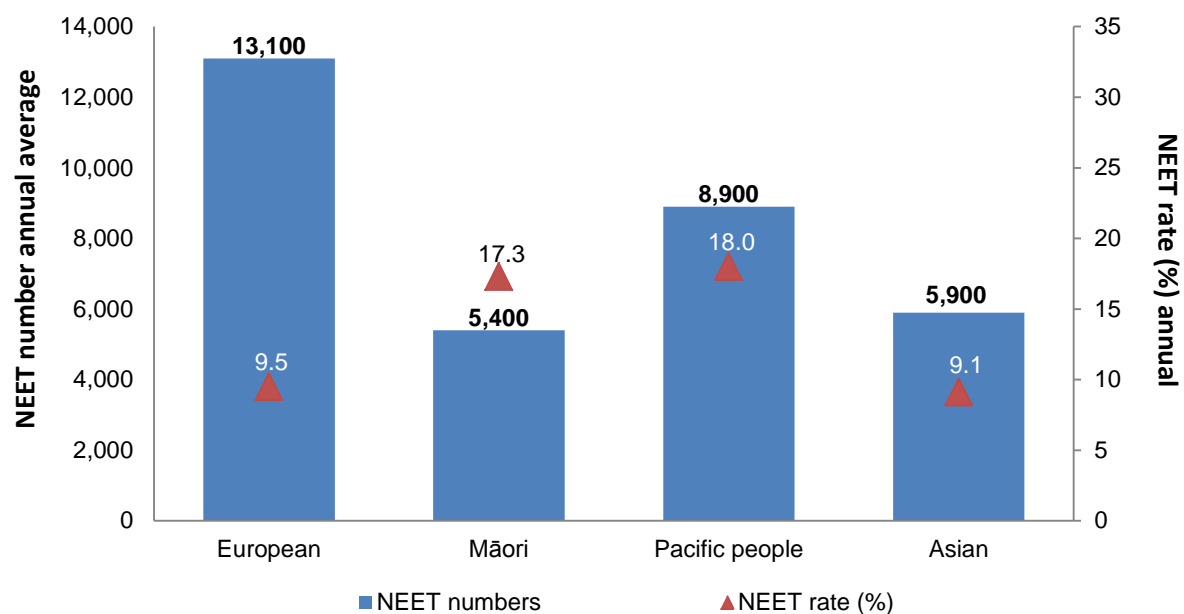
As at June 2018, 30 per cent of Auckland's youth NEET were Pacific people. With a small but growing share of the total youth population in Auckland this translates into the highest NEET rate among the four main groups – 18 per cent in the year to June 2018.

Māori have the lowest share of Auckland's youth NEET (out of the four main ethnic groups) with 5400 or 18 per cent of total NEET youth in the year to June 2018. For the first time since 2004, Māori did not have the highest rate of youth NEET in Auckland, with a NEET rate of 17 per cent just slightly lower than that of Pacific people (see Figure 9).

A relatively low share of Auckland's NEET youth are Asian, with 5900 or 20 per cent of total NEET youth. This group recorded the lowest NEET rate of nine per cent in Auckland.

⁶ All other ethnic groups make up approximately five to seven per cent of total youth NEET and are excluded due to their high error margins.

Figure 3: Youth NEET numbers and NEET rates (%) by ethnic group in Auckland, annual average June 2018



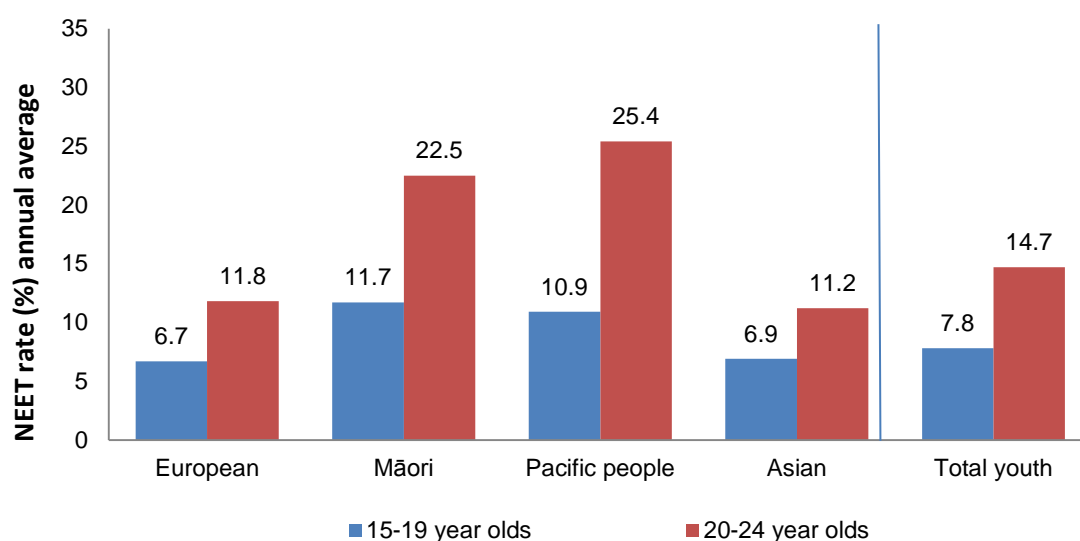
Note: The groupings of ethnicities are not mutually exclusive because people can and do identify with more than one ethnicity.

2.4 NEET youth by ethnicity and age

As Figure 4 shows, when the data is further broken down to explore differences across the main ethnic groups by age, the overall pattern of higher NEET rates among those aged 20 to 24 is evident in all ethnic groups.

This is particularly pronounced among Māori and Pacific youth aged 20 to 24 compared to other ethnic groups (Māori 22.5% NEET and Pacific 25.4% NEET).

Figure 4: Youth NEET rate (%) by age group and ethnicity, annual average June 2018



Note: The groupings of ethnicities are not mutually exclusive because people can and do identify with more than one ethnicity.

2.5 Youth NEET by local board area

In looking at where young NEET people live in Auckland it is useful to consider both NEET numbers and NEET rates. These are illustrated by local board area in Figure 5 and Figure 6 respectively.⁷

The presence of large numbers of NEET youth in some areas may reflect a large youth population in that area, and the proportion of those young people who are NEET may be relatively low. An example of this is the Howick Local Board.

On the other hand, some areas have small numbers of NEET youth, but relatively higher proportions, for example, Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board.

⁷ Data by local board is indicative only. The rates showing in Figure 6 for those local boards with no numbers in Figure 5 are the rates for the relevant electoral ward. Data is not shown for Great Barrier Local Board area due to insufficient sample size for analysis.

Figure 5: Youth NEET numbers by local board area, year end June 2018

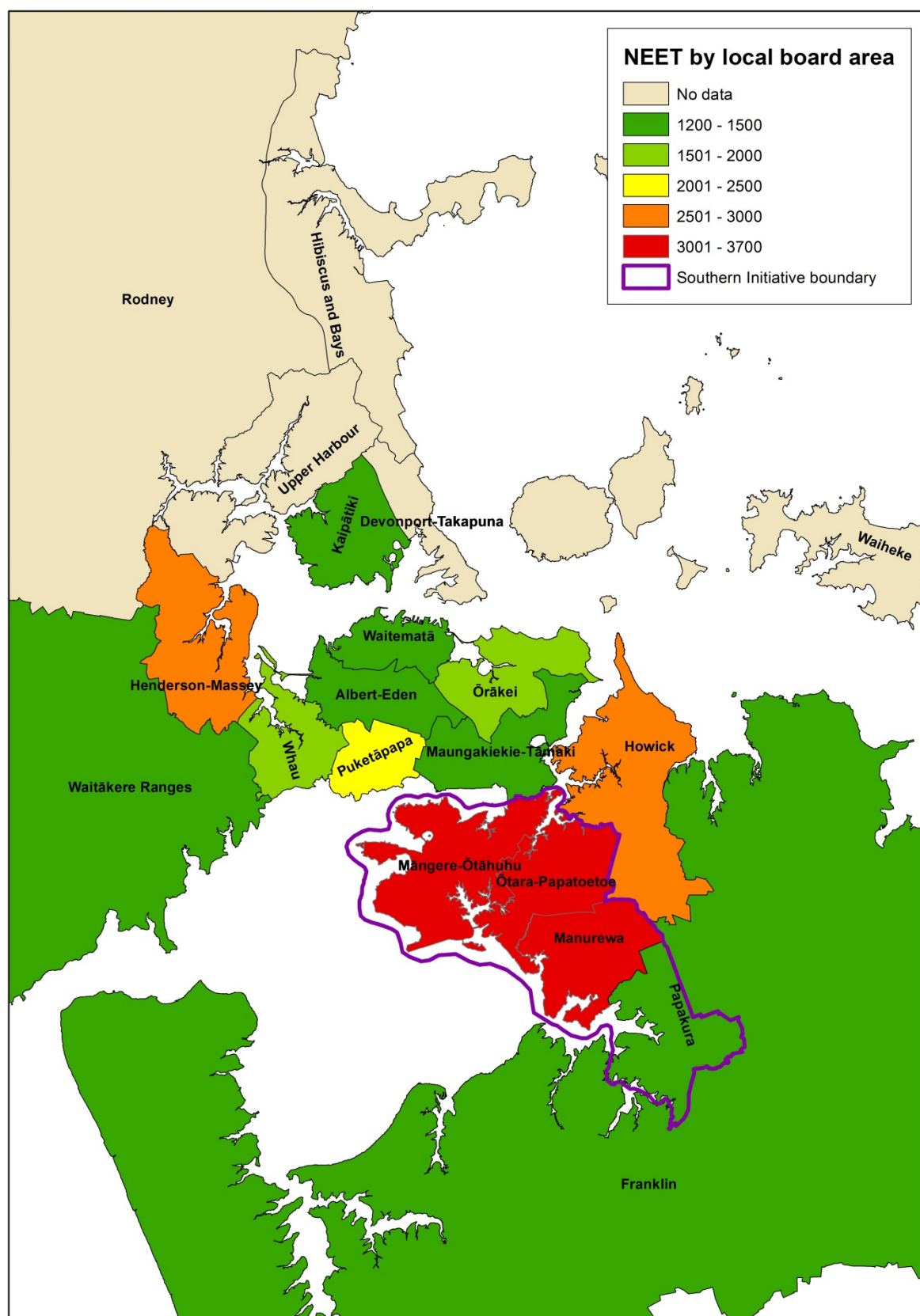
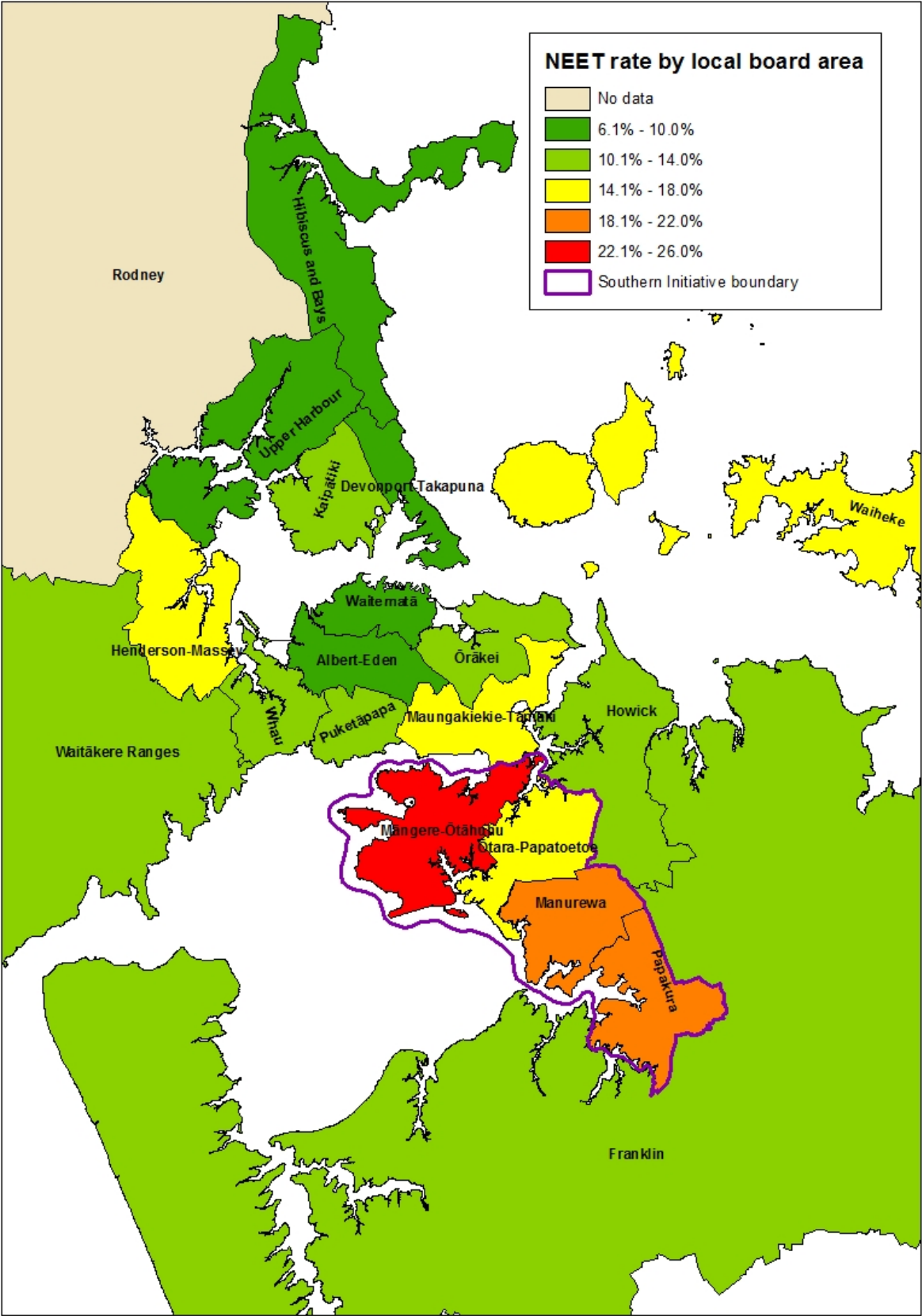


Figure 6: Youth NEET rates by local board area, year end June 2018



3 Long-term trends in youth NEET rates

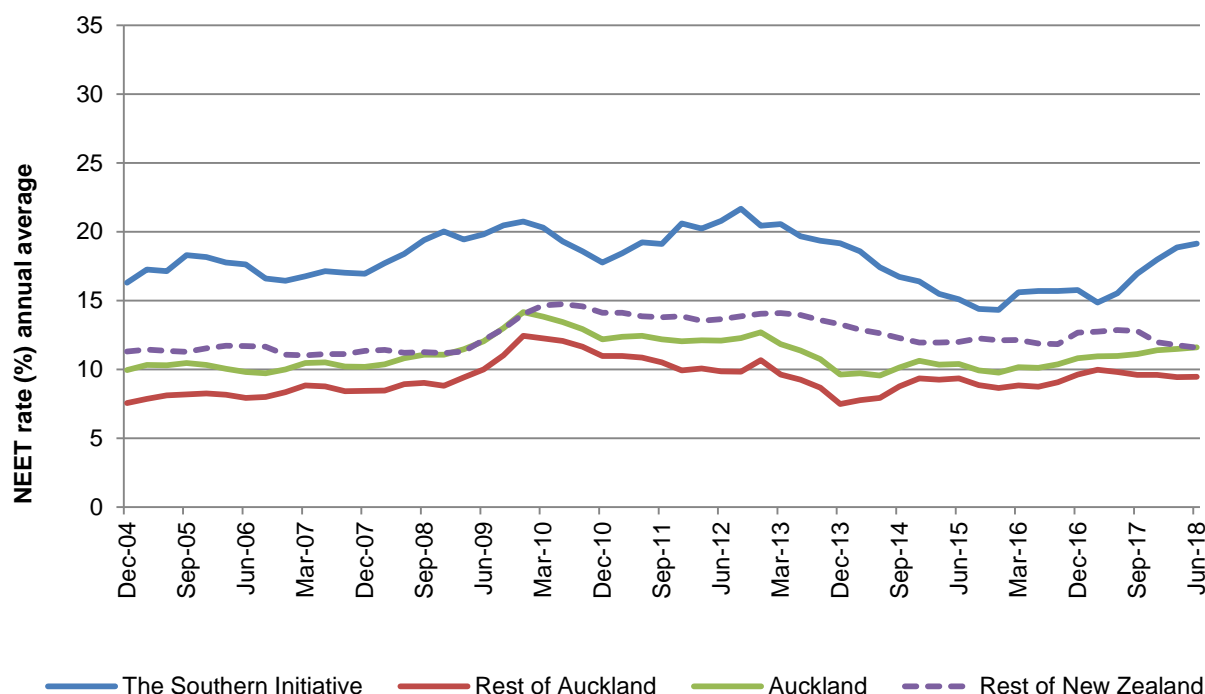
Unemployment and disengagement from the labour market among young people aged 15 to 24 intensified during and after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC). Research indicates that young people were the first to lose their jobs and the last to gain employment during such periods of uncertainty (International Labour Office, 2005).

This section looks at the long-term trends in Auckland's youth NEET rates, from the year ended December 2004 to year ended June 2018 – including the period of the GFC. It begins with a brief overview of the trends in youth NEET rates in Auckland, New Zealand and TSI followed by the trends in NEET rates across different age and ethnic groups.

3.1 Overall long-term trends by area

As Figure 7 shows, the youth NEET rate for Auckland has, for the most part been between 10 and 11 per cent since 2004. However, an exception was observed for the period between 2009 and 2013, when Auckland's economy was affected by the GFC and subsequently recovered.

Figure 7: Youth NEET rates (%), year ended Dec 2004-Jun 2018



During the GFC, a significant increase in the numbers of NEET youth was observed in Auckland. For example the number increased from 20,900 in December 2006 to the peak of 31,800 in December 2009 (an increase of 52%). The rest of New Zealand also saw a substantial increase.

Since the year ended December 2015, the Auckland NEET rate has shown a slight uptrend overall, but remains well below the peak in December 2009.

Of note in Figure 7 is the marked difference between the youth NEET rate in the TSI and the rest of Auckland. While the two rates mostly followed a similar pattern over this period there were some exceptions:

- The NEET rate in TSI area rose sharply in 2008, rather than 2009
- From 2010 to 2013, the NEET rate in TSI area had no significant down-trend
- This was followed by a rapid and prolonged fall from 2012 to 2015.⁸

3.2 Long-term trends by age

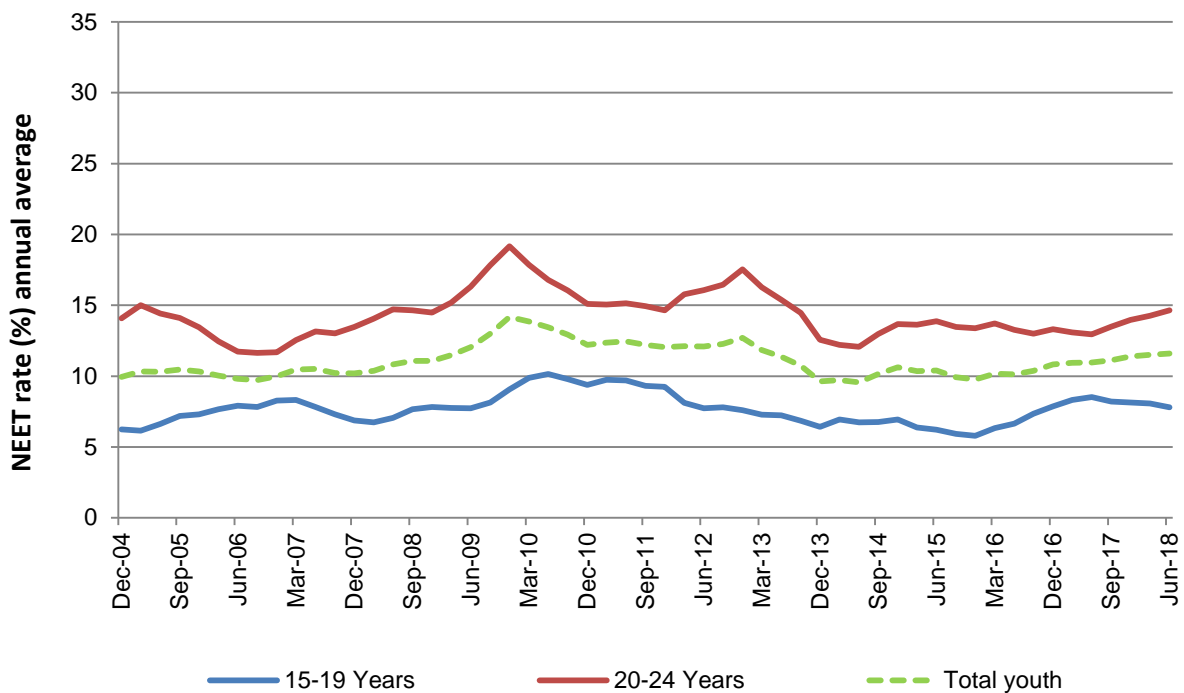
The differential between the two youth age groups has persisted over the period year end December 2004 to June 2018 (Figure 8).

As shown, the impact of the GFC was arguably more pronounced for the older age group, however, this depends to a large extent on the time period selected. For example, the NEET rate for 20 to 24 year olds increased from 12 per cent in December 2006 to 19 per cent in December 2009 (compared to an increase of one percentage point from eight per cent for 15 to 19 year olds over the same period).

This could be the result of young people in this age group staying longer in education, or taking up education during this period of uncertainty, as well as those aged 20 to 24 being adversely affected by the crisis (as the first to lose their jobs).

⁸ Results at the TSI level are based on small sub-sample sizes and are indicative.

Figure 8: Youth NEET rates (%) by age-group in Auckland, year ended Dec 2004-Jun 2018

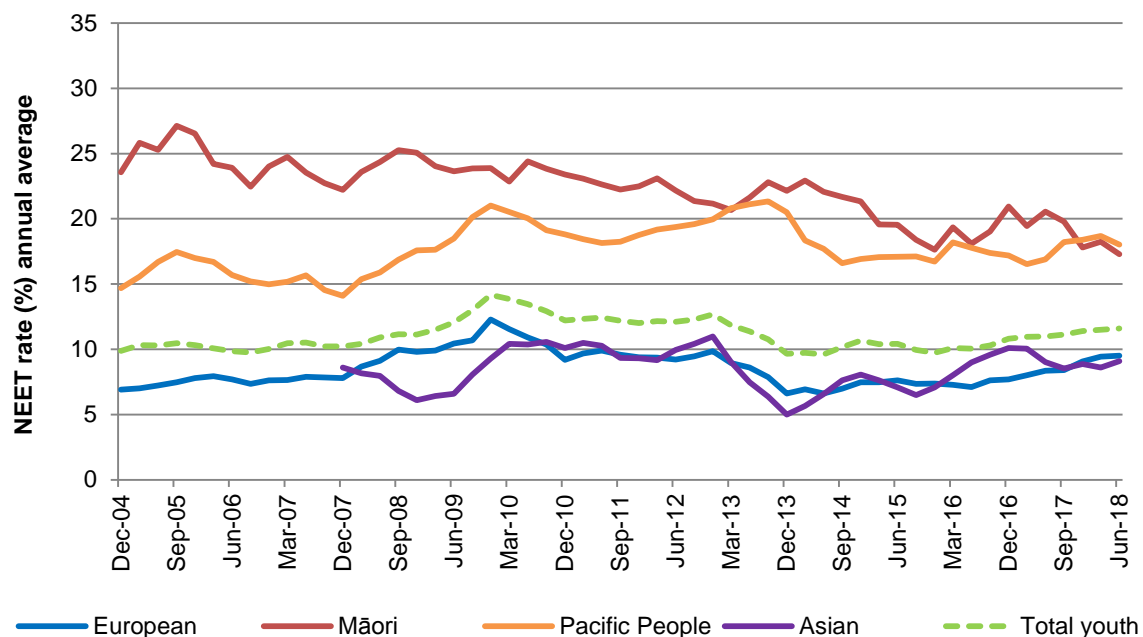


3.3 Long-term trends by ethnicity

Auckland's NEET rates among Māori and Pacific young people have been substantially higher than among those of European and Asian ethnicities and total youth in Auckland for some time (Figure 9). NEET rates among European and Asian ethnic groups, on the other hand, have been lower than Auckland as a whole.

From December 2004 to June 2018, NEET rates among all four ethnic groups generally followed similar movements. The main exception was among Māori who had comparatively elevated rates from 2004 to 2007, but the rates have since been on a generally steady downward trend. By 2018 Māori youth had a slightly lower NEET rate than Pacific peoples for the first time since 2004.

Figure 9: Youth NEET rates (%) by ethnicity in Auckland, year ended Dec 2004-Jun 2018



Note: The groupings of ethnicities are not mutually exclusive because people can and do identify with more than one ethnicity.

3.4 Long-term trends by ethnicity and age

As Figures 10 and 11 show, when the data is further broken down to explore differences across the two broad age groups by ethnicity, the overall pattern of higher NEET rates among Pacific and Maori is evident, in both age groups.

Figure 10 shows NEET rates for young people aged 15 to 19. The pattern is similar to total youth NEET, but there are some differences. The trend for total youth over time is largely driven by the European group, who form the majority of this group of NEET. The downward trend among Māori is less pronounced and more erratic than for total NEET youth, apart from the sharp drop during the period before 2008.

Figure 11 shows NEET rates for young people aged 20 to 24. The trends over time by ethnicity are also largely similar to those for total NEET youth. Among Pacific people, the NEET rates tend to follow the overall pattern but at considerably higher rates, whereas Māori NEET rates in this age group have been on a downward trend.

Figure 10: Youth NEET rates (%) by ethnicity for 15 to 19 year olds in Auckland, year ended Dec 2004-Jun 2018

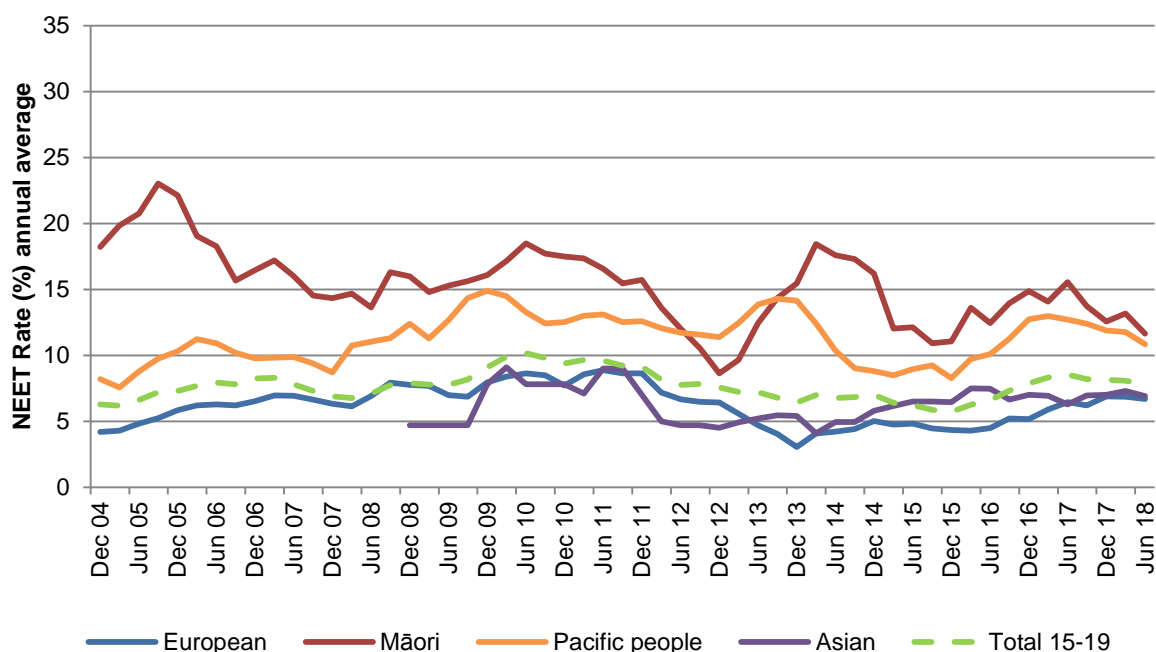
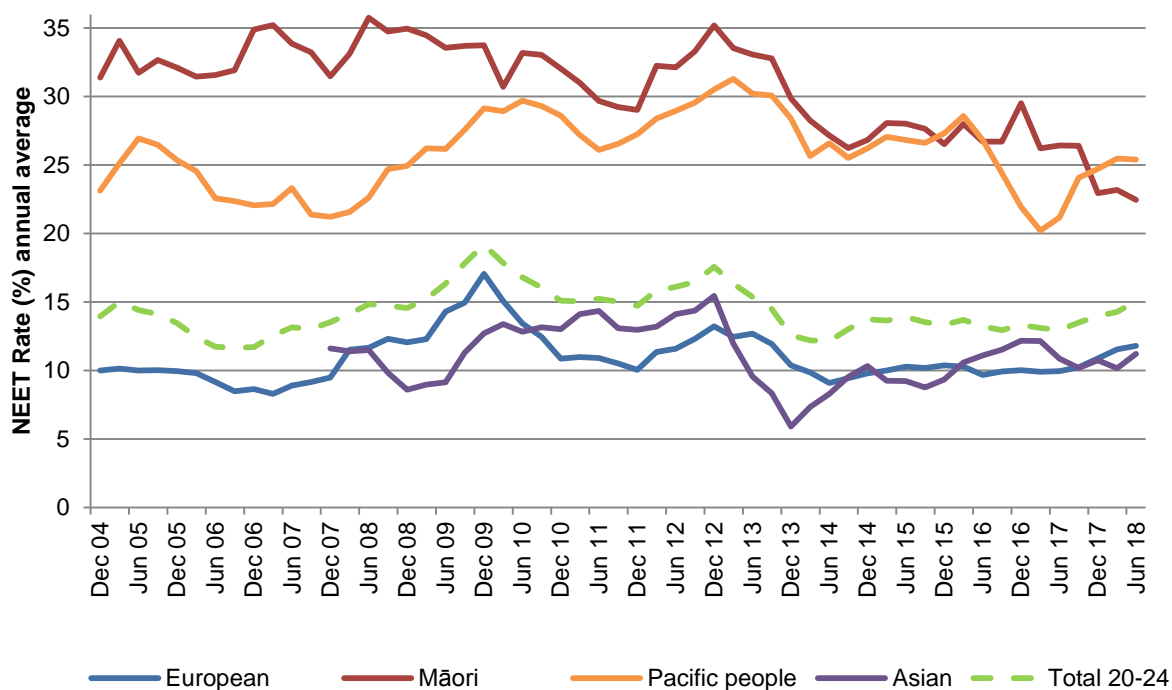


Figure 11: Youth NEET rates (%) by ethnicity for 20 to 24 year olds in Auckland, year ended Dec 2004-Jun 2018



Note: The groupings of ethnicities are not mutually exclusive because people can and do identify with more than one ethnicity.

4 NEET youth and caregiving in New Zealand

The significance of caregiving as a contributor to youth NEET is discussed in this section. The focus is on New Zealand as a whole, as youth NEET data broken down by gender and by type is not available at the Auckland regional level.

Time series data for New Zealand is available for the period 2005 to 2018.

The section starts with an analysis of NEET by gender for New Zealand, and then moves to outline the proportions of NEET youth who were caregiving.

4.1 Youth NEET by gender

As shown in Section 2.1 there were 77,900 NEET youth in New Zealand in the year to June 2018 (12 per cent of total young people aged 15 to 24).

Of this total, 53 per cent were female and 47 per cent were male.

In terms of their respective populations, 10 per cent of all young females in New Zealand were NEET, compared to 13 per cent of all young males in New Zealand.

Table 2 presents youth NEET by gender further broken down by age to show the different age-gender combinations. It shows that in the year to June 2018 the proportion of males and females aged 15 to 19 who were NEET was similar (9% and 8% respectively). However, proportion of males aged 20 to 24 who were NEET was higher than females (17% and 12% respectively).

Table 2: Youth NEET numbers and NEET rates (%) by gender and age group in New Zealand, annual average June 2018

Gender	15 to 19 years		20 to 24 years	
	NEET numbers	NEET rate (%)	NEET numbers	NEET rate (%)
Female	11,600	8	29,500	12
Male	14,200	9	21,700	17

4.2 Youth NEET by gender and type

In the year to June 2018, less than half (45% or 35,400) of youth NEET in New Zealand were not in the labour force, not in education and not providing caregiving. Over a third (37% or 28,600) were unemployed and not in education, and the rest (18%, or 13,800) were not in the labour force and not in education, but were caregiving.

There was a strong gender difference in who was caregiving, with about one in three female NEET in New Zealand involved (32%), compared to less than one per cent for male (Table 3).

Table 3: Share of youth NEET by gender and type in New Zealand, year to June 2018

Youth NEET type	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
NILF, not in education, not caregiving	55	38	45
NILF, not in education, caregiving	-	32	18
Unemployed, not in education	45	30	37
Total	100	100	100

Note: NILF refers to Not in the Labour Force.

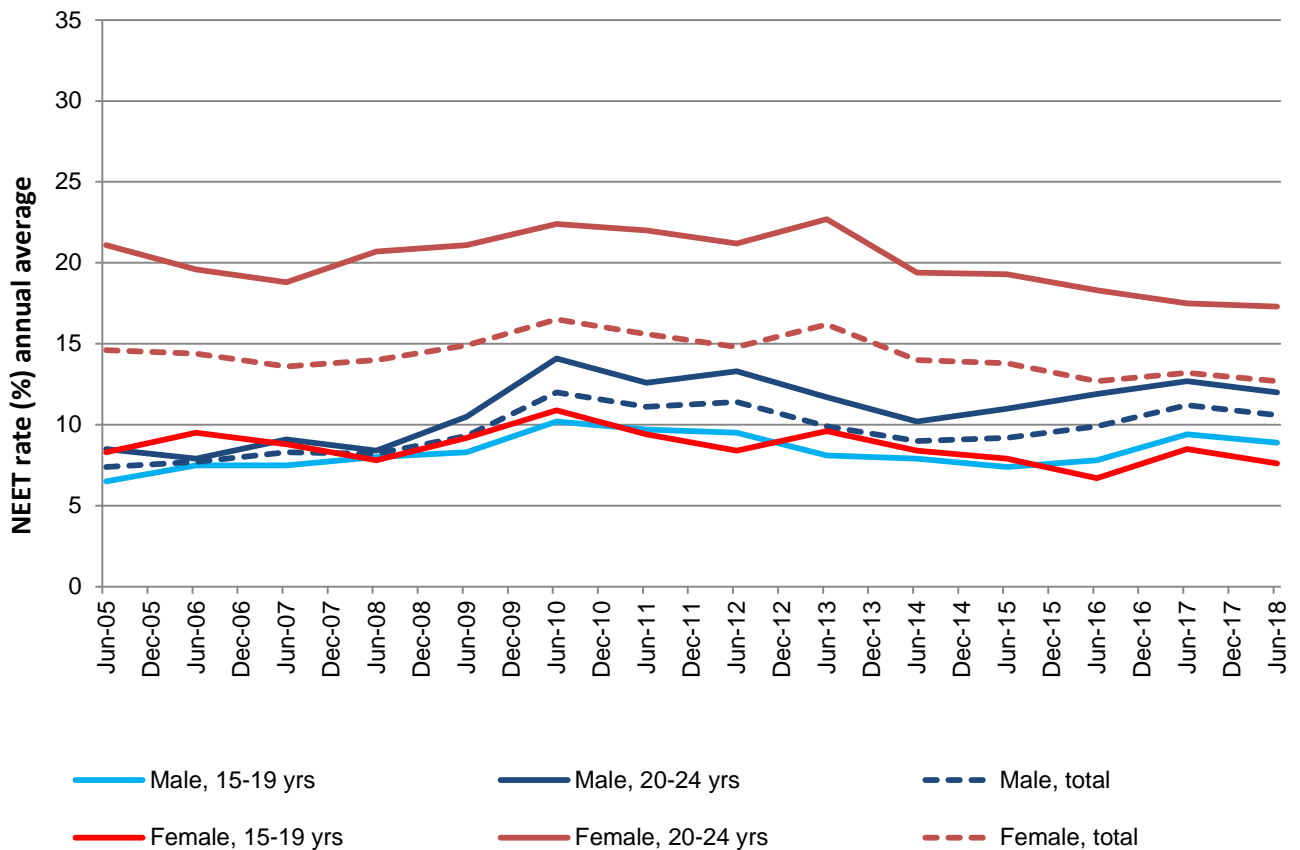
4.3 National long-term trends by gender and age

Historically, the national NEET rate for young females has been higher than young males (Figure 12). However, the differential between male and female rates has been decreasing, moving from an eight per cent differential in the year ended June 2005 (15% of females compared to 7% of males) to two per cent in the year ended June 2018 (13% of females compared to 11% of males).

Over the period June 2005 to June 2018 the following trends were also observed:

- The NEET rate for 15 to 19 year olds was similar for males and females, fluctuating between seven and 11 per cent.
- The NEET rate has been higher for females compared to males aged 20 to 24 however, this differential appears to be narrowing from 2013 onwards, by a decline in the NEET rate for females aged 20 to 24. As will be discussed in the next section this is partly explained by the decline in females aged 20-24 years providing caregiving.

Figure 12: Youth NEET rate (%) by gender and by age in New Zealand, year ended Jun 2005-Jun 2018



4.4 Long-term trends in NEET youth providing caregiving

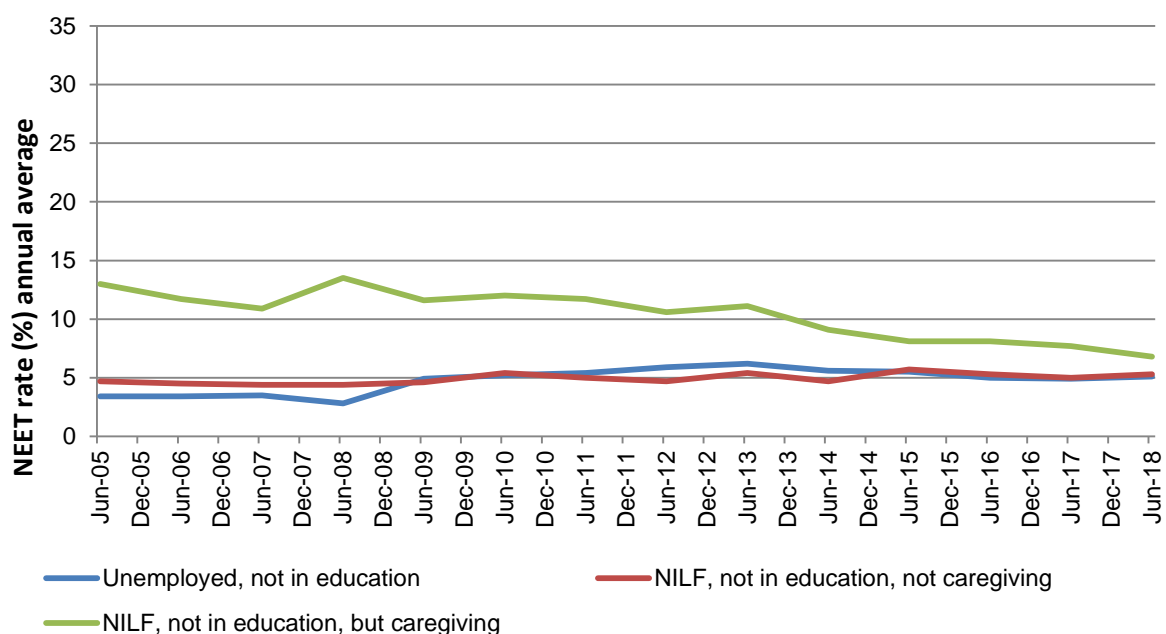
There has been a notable decline in recent years in the numbers of NEET youth in New Zealand who are not in the labour force and not in education, but who are providing caregiving.

Over the period from June 2005 to June 2018 there was a notable decline in the numbers of NEET youth who were not in the labour force (so not officially unemployed) but were providing caregiving (40% decline or 9100). This compares to an increase of 62 per cent in NEET youth who were not in the labour force and also not providing caregiving, and a 47 per cent increase in the remaining NEET category – those who were in the labour force, but unemployed.

As Figure 13 shows, the significance of caregiving as a contributor to youth NEET for females aged 20-24 years has also been on a strong downward trend since 2005. Female NEET aged 20 to 24 who were providing caregiving declined by 6800 over the 13 year period observed (or from a NEET rate contribution of 13% in June 2005 to 7% in June 2018). In other words, while a substantial proportion (40%) of female NEET aged 20 to 24 were providing caregiving in 2018, this had declined from 62 per cent in June 2005. This could be the result of young females taking up education or

going back to work early after having children, or delaying having children and staying in employment or education.

Figure 13: Contributions to NEET rate (%) by component for females aged 20 to 24 years in New Zealand, year ended Jun 2005-Jun 2018



Another interesting observation is that youth NEET providing caregiving in New Zealand have largely been on a down-trend since year ended June 2009, for every ethnicity except Pacific people. The number of youth NEET Pacific people who were providing caregiving increased from 2300 at June 2009 to 3000 in June 2018. This will be in a broader context of increase in the total number of Pacific youth in Auckland during that time.

The largest decline was observed for those of European ethnicity (by 5400, or from a NEET rate contribution of three per cent in the year ended June 2009 to one per cent in the year ended June 2018) and Māori (by 4400 or from a NEET rate contribution of 8% to 4% over the same period).

5 Concluding remarks

As this report shows, NEET youth in Auckland are diverse. They are made up of young females and males, aged 15 to 24 years and of European, Māori, Pacific people, Asian and other ethnicities. They include those who are unemployed and not in education, and not in the labour force and not in education. Some are caregivers. They are located across all the local board areas in Auckland.

As this report also shows, while overall NEET youth rates are remaining steady over time, differences in NEET rates exist between Auckland's young Māori and Pacific people with other ethnic groups. This also plays out geographically with relatively high rates in some local board areas compared to others.

While NEET data is useful and fills an important gap in our understanding of NEET youth in Auckland, NEET statistics do not provide the stories behind this large and diverse group of young people; their life experiences, their problems and difficulties, needs, challenges, aspirations or choices they have made. Further research that investigates this in the Auckland setting would be useful and would complement the information provided here.

This holistic approach to understanding NEET youth would be important for central and local government in developing programmes and policies aimed at reducing the number of our young people who are at risk of becoming disadvantaged or marginalised in the future.

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